DISSENT

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS:

We are aware of departing rather sharply from our usual kind of issue in presenting NEW YORK, N. Y. to our readers. Whether this departure is worth-while we leave, of course, to each reader's judgment We think it is. A great deal of work and effort on everyone's part has gone into producing NEW YORK, N. Y. Our first press run is 8,000 copies, so far our largest, and we anticipate a second run; it is by far the largest (and costliest!) number of DISSENT we have ever published.

You will find gaps and shortcomings in NEW YORK, N. Y., but clearly it was not our intent to cover each phase and aspect of the Metropolis's life. Rather, we are offering a critical and, often, constructive picture of the city as drawn by people deeply attached to it.

To the many contributors who helped produce NEW YORK, N. Y. —the writers, artists, photographers, etc.—our thanks. They have worked without reward or recompense. Though their views may appear divergent, they hold in common a strong feeling, even love, for New York and evidence a common sadness over its decline and its difficulties.

—THE EDITORS

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DISSENT

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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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THE CITY

Robert Nichols

I

I sing of the city revived. Citizen, I cry to you in favor of integration and municipal reconstruction. It is time that you reckoned up the cost of your own follies.

Consider: a city wasted at the guts like present-day Detroit, or like Carthage, Zabae or ancient Tun Huang whose market stalls have crumbled into dust and whose main squares have become the stony pasture for goats.

With the receding of the third, seventh and eighteenth waves of traffic, the lungs of the metropole have been pumped dry. Nothing is left but old postal routes, cracked mains, and monuments torn from their plinths lying among the hardhack and huckleberry—species which seem to readily colonize these burned-out areas.

The spirit of applied mathematics broods. All surfaces bear the glacial traces of cars. The wheel has described its double arabesque, its exquisite compound parabola, on a field of bare snow.

Children play among the debris. They climb barefoot among the fashionable used brick and antique doorknobs salvaged from the old Murray Hill Hotel. A small replica of the Gulf Oil building has been reconstructed out of rusted beer cans. The Jumel Mansion has been reassembled out of the shards of cracked flower pots.

Parades are held. Chlorophyll has become scarce. Gigantic mushrooms inflated with helium are pulled through the charcoal streets. On the cornices of the public library, lime-gatherers are at work.

In the main gathering place, which is called "Mauve Square," a statue has been set up in memory of monochrome, who has devoted a large part of his very considerable

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fortune during the past years towards the rediscovery of pigment. His factories have been opened to the blind of all ages, who work there without discrimination, and in the most agreeable circumstances.

Already three of the six known primary colors have been synthesized, and it is confidently predicted that the entire spectrum, as it was originally worked out, will be rediscovered during the next decades.

II

I am told that an exchange of high commissioners of Welfare has been arranged. Important mutations in the field of educational policy have already been obtained by the bombardment of field supervisors with electronic particles. Junk playgrounds have been established. Here minor bruises are permitted, and simple acts of cruelty, bloodshed and routine sexual perversion between peers—within limits set by the Board of Estimate. Improvements long overdue—and which reaffirm the solidarity of our youngsters with those all over the world everywhere!

As the excavations are carried down, games continue to be played on all surfaces. The prehistoric mask of Gov. DeWitt Clinton has been dug up. A set of dominoes said to belong to the late J. P. Morgan, with counters made from the bones of aboriginal lobstermen, has been found in the ruins of Harvard Club. And these may still be used!

All the coordinates have been brought to bear. Proper deductions have been made from roundelays and certain primitive mimes which appear to celebrate in a degenerative form the original Mayflower Compact. Time has been reinstituted!

III

Now we are getting somewhere. Come with me. Drive through these sunken streets which have been recently reclaimed from the New Jersey marshlands by the Department of Marine and Aviation. One moves at a snail's pace against the crowd of tourists and melancholy drifters, as if breasting some tangible current. The door of the taxi opens. One is escorted down the three steps of "Le Negre Diabetique" by the chasseur.

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Or sit at the window of your favorite pre-raphaelite cafe among the ruins, and watch humanity as it goes by. A whole geography could be guessed at, if there were space. If there were but room!

Deadbeats from all over the world have been assembled, drawn by the smell of chocolate and by the pornographic pictures nailed by the Chamber of Commerce over the open cellar holes, from which music vibrates. The last cowpunchers are here. Refugees from the Tong Wars. The residuary legatees of the Zuni Indians have come in search of libraries. A new order of nomadic tribesmen from the raw steppes have been drawn by the chain laundries and prospects in the chemical dye industry.

An unbelievable profusion. From particles of these faces, from sections of these gaits, gestures, inflections, as well as from an examination of hair and bits of teeth, reconstruct if you will the Great Plain. And from modes of ornament and characteristic ways of elongating and flattening certain bones, plot the limit of the Frontier.

Space recaptured! Urbs! The full Plenum!

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THE THREE FACES OF NEW YORK

Daniel Bell

I

In 1956, the Regional Plan Association, a non-profit research agency, asked the Harvard School of Public Administration to conduct an economic and demographic survey of the New York metropolitan region—a 7,000-square-mile, 22-county complex that, with its core, inner ring, and outer ring radiating forty miles out from the Empire State Building, and a population of sixteen million persons, forms the largest urban aggregate in the United States—and to project these economic and demographic trends as far as 1985.

The fruits of the three-year study have been recorded in nine books (one of which has yet to be published), and they constitute the most exhaustive analysis of the region (or of any detailed area of the United State) since the original nine-volume New York Regional Plan studies, which were concluded three decades ago. A single volume, *Metropolis 1985*, by Raymond Vernon, the director of the survey, interprets the results of the more detailed researches.

Mr. Vernon and most of his associates are economists (with the exception of the historian Oscar Handlin, who did the volume on "The Newcomers," and the political scientist Robert Wood, who is writing the study of local government). They see the growth of cities largely as a function of changes in market patterns, and these, in turn, as a function of resource location, transportation costs, and labor supply. Sociological nuances—such as the thought that New York triumphed over Philadelphia in the early nineteenth-century race for commercial supremacy (the physical port advantages of each were about equal) because the free-wheeling traders found the fluid ways of New York more congenial than the already rigidified class structure of Philadelphia; or that the distinctive tempo of New York life in the first decades of the twentieth century reflected the emergence of a fast-moving and new type of manufacturing enterprise, with easy access, high turnover rate, and sudden rises and falls in wealth; or that the remarkable efflorescence of corporate building in New York in the nineteen-fifties was due to prestige rather than to economic need—all are awkwardly suggested, rather than elaborated and explored. Yet no picture of an urban civilization can be complete without such sociological considerations, for, just as good will is often an intangible yet real element in the assets of a business firm, so do status structure, cultural environment, and entertainment resources become inextricable components of the character of a city.

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To indicate one example: the expansion of corporate headquarters has given a "new face" to New York, from the unbroken lines of the new glass houses on Park Avenue to the towering high-rental apartment houses along the upper East Side. Yet in the late forties, the talk of the business world was largely about New York's impossibility as a business center, and the need for decentralization. (General Foods moved out to Westchester. Time Inc., which owned the site of the Hotel Marguery, sold it and took an option on land in Rye. Jean-Paul Sartre, commenting sourly on the grid-shadowed streets of midtown New York, predicted that no new office buildings would be erected in New York.) Yet how wrong all this talk was! Since 1947, over 132 new office buildings (86 since 1954) have been put up in Manhattan (Union Carbide, which had bought land in Tarrytown, erected a fifty-story tower on the Marguery site; Time, Inc. built a forty-eight-story building west of Rockefeller Center). Today, 135 of the 500 largest industrial corporations in America have their headquarters in New York. In all, 44,700,500 square feet of office space—or half as much as existed before 1947— has been added to Manhattan since the end of the war.*

Some of this growth has been in response simply to the need for more space, as the administrative ranks of business, reflecting the new complexities of corporate management, expanded. (The labor force as a whole has been growing about one per cent a year; the white-collar force about three per cent a year, in the last two decades.) But equally, as an intangible fact, the convergence of corporations on New York can also be seen as the final stage in the breakup of family capitalism. Where an enterprise has family roots, the prestige and power of the head of the firm are displayed in the town or city where the enterprise has begun, and where the family has its social power. (Alcoa, for example, was on the verge of abandoning Pittsburgh and coming to New York after the war, but Richard Mellon, for family reasons, held the firm back and initiated the move that resulted in the renovation of the "golden triangle.") When the "deracinated" manager "makes it" in the impersonal world of corporate capitalism, he wants other people to know about it, these other people being the tribe of corporate managers; hence the lure of New York.

Such an explanation is, admittedly, speculative, and difficult to prove statistically. Yet if one is trying to deal with the forces that shape the character of New York, such speculation is necessary. Otherwise one simply extrapolates existing trends and calls it analysis.

From a different perspective, Mr. Vernon's concluding volume is curiously bloodless, the result of its failure to speculate on the ways in which the admitted defects of the city—broken-down housing, choking

*Since 1947, two billion dollars in private capital have been expended for construction in Manhattan. Over one billion three hundred million went into office buildings; over six million went for high-rental apartment houses (e.g., Imperial House, at Sixty-eighth Street and Lexington Avenue, where *rentals* are from fifty-five hundred to fourteen thousand dollars a year). Most of the new office construction has been in the midtown area, from Fortieth Street to Fifty-ninth Street; the residential construction has been along the upper East Side.

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traffic, inadequate services—might be remedied, a task the researchers eschewed. Yet if a study is to have any value for policy makers, must it not consider alternative "models" of what New York can be, so that some political steps could be taken to achieve one or another goal? Of all this, more later. Let us take as a useful starting point the fact that the economic life of the area—the kinds of employment, the number of jobs, the distribution of income—is basic to any understanding of the region. What, then, do we know?

II

In economic terms, New York is an iceberg. The visible portions are the theaters, art galleries, museums, universities, publishing houses, restaurants, night clubs, *espresso* cafés, smart stores—all the activities that give the city its peculiarly glittering place as the metropolis of America. Yet the base of New York's economic structure is largely unseen. Six and a half million people are employed in the region. Sixty per cent take in each other's wash (i.e., engage in "local-market" activities). Forty per cent—and this is the crucial group—are in the "export trade"; i.e., they produce goods and services sold in the national market; they turn out the added value that sustains the region. The breakdown of the latter group is surprising: New York is usually thought of primarily as a business and finance center, yet two out of every three jobs in its national-market activities are in manufacturing. (New York, in fact, is the largest manufacturing city in the world.) But even here a further distinction has to be made.

If one asks why an enterprise chooses one region rather than another, the answer is that for some, the main need is to be near the supply of raw material; for others, to be close to markets, in order to reduce transport costs; for still others, to be able to draw on a pool of skilled or low-cost labor. The industrial map of nineteenth-century America—the location of heavy industry between the coal deposits of western Pennsylvania and Kentucky, and the iron ore at the end of the Great Lakes, the whole intertwined by the lakes and the Ohio River Valley system—was shaped by these considerations.

New York has offered a peculiarly different attraction. It has not been transport savings or labor costs that have attracted industry, but "external economies," the availability of a pool of specialized facilities and skills that could be shared by firms without their having to carry these items as part of permanent overhead costs. Typically, this has meant that the industries moving to New York tend to be small, fast-moving, risk-taking, and highly competitive in a rough-and-tumble race. In essence, New York is a bazaar in which speed, variety, and specialization are the hallmarks of the services it offers. "For instance," Mr. Vernon points out,

> producers of made-to-order giant turbines and generators are not found in the Region because they operate on production schedules which call for delivery three or four years after the placement of an order. But a high-

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style dress is sometimes conceived and executed in a fortnight; an advertising brochure may be only hours or days in the making; a lawyer's brief is often printed between midnight and morning.

A dress house, therefore, will need to have immediately available a wide variety of buttons, buckles, embroidery, rhinestones, or other trimmings, without wanting to carry full stocks of these items or machinery for making them; an advertising agency needs a large number of type faces and since it would not be profitable for one firm to have on hand all the specialized fonts that may be called for, smaller printing companies thus find a place for their services.

The moral of all this is that New York exists really because of its fantastic variety of *non-rationalized* enterprises and services, easy to break into because of low capital requirements, but in which survival depends upon ingenuity, "shmearing," cutting a corner, trimming a margin, finding some other way to make a fast buck in the swift race. This is what has given New York its particular beat and distinctive character. It is now changing, but enough survives, as does something of the character of the city's early history, and if New York is now beginning to enter a third phase—that of domination by the large corporate headquarters—the three faces exist as on a palimpsest. To understand New York, one must know all the faces.

III

New York began as a port city. Its large protected harbor, along with the rail-canal system leading to the West, made for important advantages. Point-counterpoint followed with easy economic logic. Frequent ship sailings, the concentration of freight forwarders, insurance specialists, banks to facilitate credit, wholesalers to distribute imports—all these spurred the development of the port. Immigrants poured in, and many of them stayed right in the city. A large floating labor supply, crudely organized, assured a cheap reserve of labor and a quick, profitable turnaround for the ships.

The port gave New York much of its rough nineteenth-century character: the sailor dives along Water Street, the brawling underworld of the Five Points section, the open brothels along Greene Street—features duplicated in every port city of the world, from Marseille to Shanghai. With the growth of the city, the rough spots became localized—along the edges of the piers in Chelsea, around the rim of Red Hook—or they were shoved across the river, to Hoboken and Jersey City. But the port had given New York its initial impetus for growth, and the pattern of "external economies" was duplicated in the city's next epoch.

This second face, which materialized with the emergence of the Jewish community, is the New York of the small enterpriser. The archetypal novel of this period is Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky,* a saga (such novels can only be sagas) of the class that moved from the sweatshops of the lower East Side to the lofts of Seventh Avenue. But if the heart of this economic category has been the dress industry,

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the same problems turn up in an array of small-unit, single-plant firms —small companies engaged in printing, plastics, electronics, and small-scale machine work. These industries are characterized by uncertainty, by the capacity to make quick-change production shifts, the search for an item or product that will be a sudden hit. Each of these industries depends upon a whole range of auxiliary services. Each manufacturer being, so to speak, a retailer, behind him are the smaller wholesalers who supply his needs. Because decisions have to be made swiftly, there is scarcely any intra-firm hierarchy, little bureaucratization, and usually only a single establishment. (The number of such one-plant firms—averaging about twenty-five employees each—is enormous. In forty-seven industries that are almost entirely single-plant firms, thirty per cent of their national employment is concentrated in New York.) These factors make for an extraordinary reliance on agents, banks, and other finance outfits for survival. Few of these firms have sufficient capital for expansion, and often don't even have enough money to cover current production costs. The commercial banks and factoring corporations thus advance short-term loans or take over accounts receivable as the way of supplying the small companies with cash. Inevitably, the finance agencies achieve a commanding position in the city.

The nature of these enterprises, and the ethnic cast of the men who ran them, made for an extraordinary large middle class in the New York of the last three decades—probably, though no one has ever measured it, the largest middle-class aggregate in any urban center of this country. This bourgeoisie, unlike the traditional small-town Protestant middle class, was quick, sharp, shrewd and, like as not, cynical. And yet, because so many of these businessmen were Jewish, it was a middle class that hungered for culture and self-improvement. The chief contribution of the Jews to the City of New York, as Nathan Glazer noted a few years ago, has been in their role as "consumers of culture." The large symphony orchestras, the theaters, trade-book publishing, the avant-garde magazines, the market for drawings and paintings—all have, as their principal audience and consumer, the Jewish middle class. And this was made possible largely by the entrepreneurial wealth of small-unit firms.

AND YET THIS ECONOMIC FACE of New York, which has dominated the city in the past three decades, is changing. One cause of it is the growing rationalization of industry. Consider the radio business, for example: it originated in the New York area because, with its technology untried, its production methods unsettled, its markets uncertain, and its need for sub-contractors crucial, this region, with its vast pool of specialized facilities, offered the most attractive location. As production methods became standardized and markets enlarged, the radio firms grew in size. Increasingly, the critically competitive elements became labor costs and transportation to national markets, rather than production design, and so the industry began moving from New York. Today, the garment industry—the prototype of small entrepreneurial business—is undergoing a small-scale revolution. The recent popularity of casual wear and sports

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clothes has brought mass-production methods into the industry, to a previously unheard-of extent. An innovation like "section work" in women's clothes, or the breakdown of skill components in actual production, has also spurred the growth of larger business units. And the New York market is losing its share of business.

A second influential factor has been the role of the truck. With the expansion of road transport, industries could begin to separate those operations dependent upon the "bazaar" from those primarily in need of low-paid labor. In the garment industry, therefore, design, cutting, and display are now done in New York, but the actual sewing—the chief labor expense—is farmed out to contractors in the hinterlands of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. (Similarly, in publishing, book houses and magazines keep their editorial offices in New York, but the printing is done out of town.)

With the decline of these small industries has come a change in the temper of Broadway entertainment. The raucous-toned, vulgar, smart-aleck jokes of a George Jessel, a Myron Cohen, or a Joe E. Lewis reflected the wise-guy quality of the old garment trades. Today, the new sophisticates—raconteurs and satirists like Shelley Berman, Mort Sahl, Elaine May and Mike Nichols—reflect the new face of New York, a white-collar dominance of the large corporation and its advertising-media satellites.

JUST WHY THE LARGE corporations keep swarming to New York is not a question economists can answer with their particular logic alone. As Mr. Vernon points out, in manufacturing, "an economic version of the Darwinian principle, feeble and dilute though its effects may be, operates to push industries towards the location which yields the largest return. [But] the central office of a large corporation produces no easily defined product whose costs can be 'priced out' at alternative locations." There are, to be sure, some "external economies" available in New York to the mammoth corporation. Financial institutions like brokerage houses and insurance companies can draw upon many different economic analysts. Corporations with problems ranging in diversity from taxes to advertising commercials can arrange for quick consultations with experts. Yet in the age of the telephone and private company airplanes, distance is less of a barrier to communication than ever before. What draws the rationalized, bureaucratized corporate behemoths to New York is the ancient longing for desire and display. New York is now a new bazaar, with sleek symbols glorifying "Seagram" or "Pan Am" or "Lever Brothers" or "Pepsi-Cola"—the new doges of Park Avenue. It is no longer the ethnic-dominated, nervously swift city of "I Can Get It for You Wholesale." The horizontal axis of New York has shifted from Seventh Avenue to Madison.

One sees this in small ways and large—the mushrooming of chic art galleries, and the cultural dominance of the art world. The New York of the thirties had a "literary" culture. Political and literary magazines, written and edited by the children of immigrant businessmen, dominated the scene. But today, the next generation, which now finds money-mak-

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ing respectable, buys art. It has become a necessary means of achieving cultural cachet. Reading a book is a solitary affair, and one needs like-minded friends to discuss its content. Art, however, is "open"—paintings, particularly large Abstract Expressionist canvases, are attention-getting devices. As a collector, one can acquire a cultural reputation. And, as a result, the art market has boomed. Within one decade, the prices of the best contemporary painters (de Kooning, Rothko, Kline, Baziotes, Gottlieb, Guston) appreciated more than ten times, an arithmetical increase of a hundred per cent per year (something few stocks can match), and even the younger painters (Hartigan, Rivers, Brooks) can now command several thousand dollars for a single painting.

The larger ecological consequences of this shift in axis is the new housing design of the city. Many parts of West End Avenue, once the *haute banlieue* of the garment district, are now transient slums. The upper East Side, once the slum, has become an area of luxury co-operative apartments selling for ten thousand dollars per room. The lower East Side now is a warren of jerry-built public barracks inhabited by Puerto Ricans and old, retired Jewish working people. The suburbs have become bedroom cities for the white-collar salariat of the corporations, and each morning as they push their way into the city, they pass increasing swarms of outward-bound Negro and Puerto Rican workers commuting to the outer ring of the region, where the new, small-manufacturing plastic, electronic, and machine-shop firms have located. And the city center? Now, more than ever, it is a crosshatching of canyoned streets congested by trucks, private cars, buses, taxis, and all the other debris of an industrial civilization. Yet the only "solution" to this congestion is the proposal of the redoubtable Robert Moses for a number of east-west arterial flumes which would bounce the traffic even more violently against itself.

IV

And the future? The authors of the study estimate that the region's population will grow to 16,800,000 by 1965, to 19,000,000 by 1975, and—barring a large migration such as the spectacular Puerto Rican one of the last decade—to 22,000,000 by 1985.

The number of jobs will rise as well, probably to 9,500,000 by the target year—an increase of about forty-five per cent over 1954. But here significant shifts, reflecting forces already in motion, will take place. Port employment will probably decline. New York has already lost the major share of bulk-cargo shipments—coal, grain, iron ore, and petroleum—which can be loaded and unloaded mechanically, in single-boat units. The mechanization of freight-handling, beginning initially with pallets and extending now to fishy-backs—i.e., the hoisting of truck trailers directly onto the ship from pier or railhead—means a decrease in the need for unskilled labor. And competitively, the growth of the St. Lawrence Seaway—through a single great port development on the Great Lakes, as is now being planned along the Indiana dunes below Chicago—may hasten the decline.

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Manufacturing will barely manage to hold pace with the growth of the region. But here the internal shifts will be more important than the small growth. The traditional small-unit industries—clothing and printing—will lag, while large increases will occur in metal-product and electrical-machinery manufacturing, reflecting the new technology of the times. The largest growth in jobs will come about in white-collar employment. Financial personnel will grow about eighty-five per cent; business and professional services about seventy per cent; and government jobs more than sixty-five per cent.

THESE CHANGES can be matched ecologically in the new population distributions, as well. The core boroughs of New York (Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn) will decline in resident population, and Staten Island will grow. The growth of the inner ring (Nassau County, for example), which has burgeoned in the last decade, will slow down, while the perimeter areas—the only ones still with open space—will show a spectacular jump. ("Counties like Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, and Morris promise to triple or quadruple their populations. Even more significant, because the numbers involved are larger, will be the growth of Suffolk, Monmouth, and Middlesex Counties: in absolute terms, Monmouth is projected as raising its population from 280,000 in 1955 to 1,157,000 in 1985, an almost incredible growth.") Speculators, take notice!

In comparing the magnitude of these new problems with the ineptitude of the public authorities, one begins to despair. Take, first, the problem of transportation. Although the resident population at the core of the city may shrink slightly, half a million new jobs (in business and finance) will be added to Manhattan's central business district by 1985. How will people get there? As Mr. Vernon chastely observes, "The projected magnitudes are large enough to suggest that present and projected facilities will be under a real strain to bear the expansion of daily commuting. Indeed, the projected growth is sufficiently large to permit one to say that public policy in this field may prove a key variable in determining how New York's central business district develops in the future."

The complications arise not only from added numbers but from changing modes of transportation. Fewer people are taking trains, more are taking private cars into the city. In 1948, 3,691,000 persons came into the central business district (defined as Manhattan south of Sixty-first Street), *each day*. Of these, 2,389,000 used public transport, 577,000 came by auto and taxi. In 1956, with the inflow slightly reduced (3,316,000 persons came in each day), 736,000 came by auto or taxi, an *increase* of almost twenty per cent, while the number using public transit had dropped to 1,970,000, a *decrease* of more than 12 per cent. If this trend continues, as seems inevitable, where will all the cars be put? New York City, instead of discouraging cars from coming into the city center, has begun to build a large chain of municipal garages in midtown to accommodate the cars. Surely, such a solution is madness.

The second, and larger problem, particularly for New York City,

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is housing. What has been done so far has made barely a dent in the mountain of need. In the postwar decade (1948-57), 85,000 new dwelling units were built, housing a total of 500,000 persons. Yet this program has had astonishingly little effect on the way land is used. In Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, where "renewal" has made the greatest progress, only 1.4 per cent of the total land area has been utilized. "Even when we add private buildings to public renewal," Mr. Vernon comments, "we find that in these three boroughs . . . only a fraction of 1 per cent of the dwellings were replaced per year." And will this wholly inadequate rate be stepped up in the future? It seems unlikely.

Still another complication is the fading mirage of suburbia. In the last decade, the middle class traded space for time—more open area for the home, as against a longer haul in getting to work. But with the future increases in population, what will happen to residential densities? The suburbs will soon become as choked as the city. The middle class has the choice either of moving still further out—but where? beyond Westport to New Haven, or beyond Princeton to Trenton?—or of surrendering the open suburban spaces, and still have to take the long train ride to the city.

V

What is to be done? Here our academic authors desert us. There are hints here and there of what should be attempted, of the vested interests that must be overcome, of the obstacles involved, but it is all said with innuendo and diminuendo ("Our task here, of course, is not to appraise the desirability of any such measures . . ."). The major fault of these volumes, despite the care that has gone into the gathering of small bits of data, comes of the failure to deal with the economic controllers of New York, and with their intentions. For it has been the decisions of these controllers—the large insurance companies and the banks—that have determined the contours of New York, particularly in building. By granting or withholding mortgage money, by adding size and trimming space, by assessing any project primarily in terms of cost-profit, these financial interests have been the major power centers of New York. (Shortly before his death, Vincent Astor wanted to create an open plaza on Park Avenue at Fifty-third Street, which, combined with the open space in front of Mies van der Rohe's building for Seagram, would have formed a new focal point for the city, similar to Rockefeller Center. But he couldn't get the financing for as much as a narrow tower. The National City Bank, which took over the site, put up a squat building that covers the entire footage.)

One need not look on these men as "villains" (such as the slum landlords of Harlem) who are out merely to exploit the city. Many of them are sincerely concerned with the amenities of life, and express it in such projects as Lincoln Center or the Downtown-Lower Manhattan redevelopment plans. But they are part of a system that assesses costs through a narrow economic calculus, by individual decision units, rather than in terms of social costs and social gains. For example, Erwin Wolfson, who

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is putting up the giant Pan American building—the sixty-story megalith behind Grand Central Station which will pile forty thousand people into one workplace at the hub of the city—has remarked that the "only" valid argument he heard in opposition to his project was the idea of turning the three-and-a-half-acre site into a plaza. But this was impractical, he said. In terms of an economic calculus, yes; but is it impractical in terms of space and light, a haven for pedestrians, a resting place in the center, an enhancing of light and vista?

Take the more mundane and less utopian question of traffic. The use of midtown-area city streets for private cars represents a subsidy to their owners of twenty feet of public space, at a penalty of waiting time, gas fumes, and other social costs that must be borne by everyone else who works in the area, as well as a financial loss to the rapid-transit networks, whose revenues are thus reduced. Why not bar private cars from midtown? But even this subsidy pales compared with that made to truckers and the industries they serve. Each morning and each evening, midtown streets are all but impassable because of the large forty- and fifty-foot trucks that crowd the streets and back up across the avenues—with the countless burdens of noise, harassment, lost time and other multiple indignities such congestion creates. Why not force all truck loadings to be undertaken before eight in the morning and after seven at night in the midtown district? This would be an added expense to the individual firm, but a social gain for the rest of the community. (It might even cause some firms to bring their production back to New York instead of farming it out; or, if it is proved that such costs would mean competitive disadvantages and a reduction of jobs in New York, one could subsidize these firms by reducing taxes, and thus rents, in the area—and allow them to pay for off-time loading.) Whether utopian or mundane, the point remains that few of these problems are ever explored from any cost calculus other than the individual economic unit, and often in this reckoning, the City of New York (with a Lawrence Gerosa as controller) thinks of itself simply as an economic unit, and has no conception of social costs and gains.

MORE THAN THIS, the city itself has no Master Plan that would allow it to specify priorities and budget ahead for the area as a whole. For example, the City Planning Commission, which has finally introduced a new zoning code to eliminate the present ziggurat style of skyscraper, has no effective control over the Traffic Commission, and no say in the activities of the Port Authority. The behemoth Authority, while a model of service compared with the inefficient city departments, is organized for ends that are now anti-social because of the failure to institute any over-all plan. The Port Authority finances its operations by the floating of bonds, on the basis of credit status, and it now has a vested interest in increasing vehicular traffic through the tunnels and bridges. Meanwhile the basic and obvious need for an integrated rapid-transit system, to link the entire metropolitan region and tie in, as well, the commuter railroads of New Jersey, Long Island, and Connecticut into

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the New York City subway system, fails to receive any recognition for lack of political and financial support.

But merely to blame the banks, real-estate lobbies, or powerful bureaucratic interests for the chaos of the city is too easy. Where politics is played as a brokerage game, all groups defend private interests against some generalized social desideratum. Take, for example, the postwar decision to deal directly with slum clearance in Manhattan. Any wholesale uprooting, in a city where the vacancy ratio has diminished almost to zero, could result only, as this operation did, in dumping the slum population from one section of the city onto another. Proposals for public housing in the open spaces of Staten Island, where garden-type developments would have been possible, or on the outskirts of the city, or even in the outer ring, were decried—by property owners in these areas, who didn't want Negroes; by Negro politicians in Manhattan, who feared the loss of bloc support through dispersals; by liberals, who felt it was wrong to penalize public-housing residents by increasing the time they travelled to work. So, high-rising, high-density barracks were built on the most expensive land in the world. But if housing is to be subsidized, why shouldn't its beneficiaries pay for this, in part, with travel time—particularly when the social gains would have been greater—in larger rooms and more open space. Slum clearance, as a reform slogan, won the day —but it was a pyrrhic victory.

CLEARLY NO EFFECTIVE PLAN for New York can be possible in the next twenty-five years (since so many of its problems spill over into the region) as long as the existing helter-skelter of fourteen hundred—yes, fourteen hundred—local governments, each with its own decision-making powers about taxes, traffic, schools, parks, housing, sewage, water, police, fire, and other municipal services, continue to exist in the New York metropolitan region. If the New York City economy makes sense only in regional terms, so must the polity. Without such dovetailing, none of the area's fundamental problems—transportation, housing, the port—can be solved. Why, for example, should New York City continue to maintain piers along the lower West Side and the rim of East Side Manhattan, when such piers are inefficient, and the side-street warehouses and the dilapidated wholesale markets that serve them are even more so? Why not rebuild the waterfront areas, with their spectacular abundance of light and vistas, with imaginatively constructed houses and promenades, and locate the cargo piers on the New Jersey side of the Hudson, where freight can more easily connect with trunkline railroads or highways going West and South? The city—needless to say—needs the revenue. But in a properly integrated region, taxes could foot the costs for the whole area. In short, why not begin with a social calculus, and restore the city to its people?

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POVERTY AND DESTITUTION

Dorothy Day

This article is about New York and its particular brand of poverty and destitution. We see enough of it, surely, around the offices of the *Catholic Worker* which in the last 28 years have been located successively on East Fifteenth Street, near Avenue A; West Charles Street, near the North River; 115 Mott Street; on 223 Chrystie Street; 39 Spring Street, and now our address is 175 Chrystie Street. The last three houses of Hospitality have been within two blocks of the Bowery so the men and women we see have reached what is considered the lowest depths of degradation.

Here are a few stories of some of the people we have encountered in New York who have lived with us for long periods so that they became part of our community. They were with us some years ago, and I do not feel that I am violating their privacy by writing in this way.

Elizabeth

She was a big blousy red-headed woman with a good-natured face and eyes that squinted at you between long lashes. She was good-looking in her way, but the day she came in to us she was filthy from sleeping out in basements, hallways, even on fire escapes. She was not alone, there was a tall gaunt man with a grey face with her. She was eight months pregnant and the two of them felt that some shelter was needed now. They were both very much afraid. When we became more acquainted with them we learned that they were legally married, and "in the church" too. Elizabeth was feeble-minded, and yet she tried to hang on to religion and one thing she knew was that she should not be married out of the church. He was the first addict I had ever encountered, and as far as I knew what he was taking were what they called on the Bowery "goof balls." That, in combination with the kind of liquor he drank, was powerful enough to make him fall unconscious in his plate of soup when he came to eat with us. We did not have accommodations for married couples so we took Elizabeth into the rear house at Mott Street and put her husband in the front house into the ten-bed dormitory on the top floor.

John Cort, at present an organizer for the Newspaper Guild in Boston, had just come to us from Harvard hoping to become more acquainted with the field of labor, and found himself instead helping as he said to run "a flophouse." John used to get down on his knees at night and pray. He prayed for himself and for those around

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him, the destitute and the poor I suppose. One of the seamen staying with us told me this.

We might as well clarify this notion of the destitute and the poor. The poor have some hope. They have not been so long in this condition but that they see some way out. They stay with us for months and years sometimes and then, finally, they get jobs, or they go back to school or they get married, or rejoin their marriage partners. Anyway, something happens to them, they survive and there is a certain joy and freedom in their condition. There is involuntary poverty and voluntary poverty, and we all know voluntary poverty who try to earn a living by writing. And there is, of course, the holy poverty of those who try daily to strip themselves of all attachments and to approximate to some extent the physical condition of the destitute. The destitute on the other hand have nothing—physically, intellectually, spiritually. You never see them reading a book or a newspaper as they wait on the breadline, or listening to music, or playing with an alley cat as they sit on a curb in the sun, or laughing, or telling stories.

There is life of a sort on the Bowery, a wild boisterous life, and seamen, longshoremen, restaurant and institution help and all kinds and conditions of workers come to live there for a time. There you can get a cubicle with clean bedding for a dollar a night and a cheap meal and companionship. But the destitute are those who are *always* drunk or drug-ridden, who are *always* lying in gutters and in doorways, who are finally picked up by the morgue wagon early in the morning, who are afflicted mentally, who stare stonily around them, or rush about with anguished faces, and who suffer the torments of hell. The destitute are the ill and lonely, the hopeless ones. They may be of any age.

ELIZABETH'S HUSBAND was one of the destitute. We never were able to reach him—to get inside that hard exterior. When he was conscious he was only anxious to become unconscious again as quickly as possible, and when he could find no other companion on the Bowery, no other means to get money for drugs and liquor, he came pounding on Elizabeth's door, demanding that she go out and get a job as dishwasher to take care of him. But Elizabeth was too far gone to work. Her baby was born, and died, and she returned from Bellevue Hospital and rested a day or so, and then rejoined him. He would not let her stay longer with us, nor could we let him stay because falling asleep with lighted cigarettes he set fire to mattresses and he stole. So they left us, three destitute ones, and began their life again sleeping out. It was summer.

Later when Bob Steed and Kerran Dugan and other members of the *Catholic Worker* staff were looking for a house to which we could move after notice had been served on us by the city because they wanted to put a subway under our house and were demolishing the entire block around us, we found many evidences of such families as Elizabeth and John. In all the empty, boarded-up houses on the lower East Side there were heaps of rags in corners, old mattresses dragged in, evidences of humans living like animals, like rats, in these old tenements.

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Water had been shut off, of course. There were no lights. Candles were used, empty rooms were used for toilets. It must have been unbearably cold in winter. But they were out of the wind and the rain, the snow and sleet, these destitute ones.

Before our Chrystie Street house was torn down we could look into the windows of the tenement which was to one side of us and see the Puerto Rican family which shared its home with others, bedding down on the floor in each of the three rooms. There was often screaming and fighting and sobbing and crying in these rooms. What wonder people turn to drink and dope and the dope of television to stupefy themselves and the children, so they will not suffer so much.

When I was in jail for refusing to take shelter in the April 1959 fifth Civil Defense Drill, there was a little Negro girl in the bed opposite me who claimed that the only place she could be alone was in the toilet. She had taken drugs, and later, to provide the money, to prostitution.

If such desperate measures to escape from destitution (only of course one does not escape) seem fantastic—one can only say—go live in such circumstances for a while and see.

Celia and Mike

We were talking about Celia the other night and how enormously she ate at table, and how she used to take away some crusts of bread and put them wrapped up, under her pillow at night. This is a dangerous custom with rats around. Just yesterday Italian Mike told me that rats were jumping on his shoulders at night as he slept. He had brought in some alley cats but he wanted rat cages. Not traps. Traps get blood on them and the rats smell the blood and get wise and stay away. "I wash them off of course," another neighbor says. "No I want a cage," Mike insisted. "I'll catch them and drown them every day and after a while they'll stay away." Another man said the best way was to sit quietly by the rat holes, and as they came out to hit them over the head with a club. He had killed thirteen one night. Big ones. Put them in a gunny sack and they filled an ash can.

It was a bright sunny day in May and across the street in the little Spring Street playground, old men sat at chess boards painted on the tables and the children ran screaming around at their games which always involved jumping, dancing and whirling. Little ghinko trees with their heart-shaped leaves and upstanding branches were bright green and shimmering. Mike was happy, standing over his garbage cans waiting for the trash collector, surveying his clean-swept sidewalk. Mike fetches the bread each day from Poppilardo's bakery, ten dollars' worth, and on Friday gets the free swordfish tails which a big wholesale house at the Fulton Fish Market saves for us. It makes good chowder. Every Friday he calls out to Larry the cook, "What kind of fish?" and Larry makes the stock answer, "Dead fish!" which never fails to get a burst of laughter, and from me too.

Mike is public relations man as well. "One hand washes the other," he explains as he sweeps off the neighbors' sidewalk. Once when he was

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staying at Peter Maurin Farm with us on Staten Island he refused to come in to dinner at noon. "I did no work today," he said. "I won't eat." John, the farmer, had taken away his hoe that morning and had done the cultivating himself.

I LIKE TO INTERPOLATE the little sketch of Mike, one of the poor, possessing nothing, with no salary, just the clothes on his back, a bed in a rat-ridden tenement, yet one of our best workers and in general a happy man, because he loves his work, he loves to be part of a community, serving others and working for the common good.

Celia, on the other hand, was one of the destitute. She came to us years ago because she could not live with her father who was on relief, because when he got his check he drank and tried to attack her. The relief people had no remedy for this. He was an inventor, a man of brains, talked intelligently to the relief people; he was cooperative, in other words. Celia on the other hand was obviously defective and when she told tales of her father trying to rape her, she was not taken seriously. The relief worker would not put her on separate relief, so she came to us. She was a greasy, black-haired girl, short and stout, made more so by the fact that she wore several suits or dresses and two coats. She was afraid someone would steal her clothes so she wore them all the time. She did not trust our community any more than she did her father. She never missed meals, wandered in and out with a huge purse clutched under one arm (she probably slept with it that way), and with an armload of school books. She went to night school and got good grades. She was forty before she finally left us and was still going to school.

It was the Second World War and its dearth of manpower that finally parted us. There was a job open at a little movie house on the Bowery for an honest cashier and Celia got the job, which she held for five years. At our persuading she got into a girl's shelter where she paid weekly rent and made her own meals in the basement and washed her own clothes. She also had a locker with a key so she stopped wearing all her clothes at once. It had not occurred to us, this simple solution. Or perhaps we did not have the money for lockers then, as we do not have now. You buy for one, and you have to buy for all. Her father meanwhile had died and she was saving her money, she said, to buy him a tombstone. We urged her to put her money in the bank but she would not, and sure enough one night a purse snatcher ran off with her savings which by then amounted to several hundred dollars. Her screams brought the police, who caught the thief and from then on they cared for the purse, honestly, until she spent the money for the tombstone.

Maria

Then there is Maria, a beautiful young Puerto Rican. At the age of thirteen she was seduced and had the baby in Bellevue Hospital. She was allowed to bring it home with her but her mother put her out—the house was already too crowded. The mother was an exceptional one as far as Puerto Rican mothers go. They usually are loyal to their chil-

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dren. But Maria was too dark. She was taken in by a neighbor who used her for prostitution purposes. She jumped out of the window of the rooming house and was brought to the hospital with broken legs which kept her there for a long while. I have seen the scars of her injuries. Her child was taken from her and put into a foster home since she would not give it up or put it out for adoption. When we met her she was eighteen, married again to an amiable young fellow who was always losing his job and she had a child by him and another coming. He had lost his job through a very bad accident to his hand where he worked. He never got compensation, nor his job back. His mother took him in with his one child and Maria was sleeping in the hallway, pregnant as she was, because their house too was overcrowded. So she came to live with us for the time. After the baby was born her husband found a job and an apartment. The rent charged these babes in the woods was fantastic.

"How I got this place," she began, "it was this way. This house has Italians and Jews, and the place is all run down anyway, and nobody cares as long as the rent is paid. So they had just as soon rent to Puerto Ricans. Each apartment is supposed to be for $28 a month and there are four apartments on a floor and seven floors walk-up. I'm lucky I'm on the third floor with the kids. There was an Italian woman living in the building and she told me about this place when I was over at Eldridge Street in a two-room place and we were desperate, the water frozen in the pipes and the toilet stopped up and the gas and electric turned off. So we just had to move. So she said, 'There's an empty place in the house where some friends of mine moved out, and it is my furniture and if you will buy the furniture you can get the apartment. It will be $23 a week.' My husband was getting thirty-five and here we were going to have to pay $23. So we signed a paper, that was last June, and moved in, and then from June to December we paid her $23 a week and she paid the rent for us."

Maria got up from the chair by the good kitchen table, the only whole thing in the house, that table with its four chairs, and fetched a box from the kitchen shelf full of papers and odds and ends, and began sorting through them. "Here are the receipts for the statue of the Blessed Mother—you pay every week until you pay the thirteen dollars and thirty-four cents and it takes twenty-five weeks to pay. Landan Brothers, down on Chambers Street. And here are the receipts for the rent."

TRUE ENOUGH, there were the evidences of man's inhumanity to man, the exploitation of the poor by the poor. One set of immigrants exploiting the newest set of immigrants.

"My husband got sick in December and had to stay home from work, so then the neighbor told us we could pay ten dollars a week to her and the rent, $28, to the 'super,' so that it what we have been doing."

In the front room which had two windows looking out on the street there was a dresser and two over-stuffed chairs and there had been plastic curtains and a davenport which had since fallen apart. It had been

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replaced by a smaller davenport bed which another neighbor had given her. There was a crib which Maria herself had bought at a second-hand store and in the kitchen an icebox, the old-fashioned kind that you put a cake of ice in when you had the money for the cake of ice. There are still coal and ice men in cellars all over the east side, carrying heavy loads of ice and coal up steep tenement-house steps. Our Mike had done just such work and had supported his father and sisters until his father had died and his sisters had married.

The stove in the kitchen was a combination coal and gas stove, but the gas had been turned off and the coal stove had holes in it and the pipe which led into the chimney had rusted apart. I didn't look into the bedrooms, the two of them, but the older boy slept in one and another family had the other. Another evictee, jobless, the destitute helped by the poor. Or perhaps the poor taken in by the poor, as between the two of them they were able to raise some food to feed the hungry mouths. The toilets were in the hall, and the halls smelled of cats and rats and toilets, a most familiar tenement-house odor. Windows in the kitchen and bedrooms looked out on an airshaft and other windows and only by peering out and straining one's neck to look up four more flights was it possible to see the sky.

That back bedroom was just the kind of place I had lived in when I went to work for the *New York Call* at the time of World War I. I paid five dollars a month, and I had a phonograph on which I had paid a dollar down and a dollar a month, and the bed was warm with a sheet-covered featherbed, and there was a good smell of cooking from the kitchen. The tailor and his wife and three children lived in the other rooms and there was always work and the gas had never been turned off. But here there was no fire to cook by, and according to the Arabs, "fire is twice bread."

The poor can live in such places and have some measure of comfort but the destitute are on every side, dogged by ill health, unemployment, accident and hunger.

I sat there for a while with Maria at her kitchen table, pondering over the slips before me, wondering how we could help her out of this immediate slough. For seven months she paid $93 a month, rent and furniture payment. Since then she had paid $40 a month to the avaricious widow and $28 to the landlord, $68 in all, instead of $93. That had been a generous reduction indeed. I frowned over the arithmetic before me. "The furniture looked quite good when we moved in," Maria tried to apologize for having been taken in. "It looked wonderful. You can't imagine how good it looked."

And there was still a year and three months to pay on it. Over a thousand dollars for junk, and nothing left of it by the time it was paid for. The gas and electric bill was $38.64 and had to be paid before the "utilities" could be turned on again. "It is very expensive to be poor," a friend says.

When we finally got this mess straightened out for them, Maria's husband's job sufficed to keep them.

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Maria never comes to us except when she is in real need and then a few dollars helps her out. There is always someone in the office who chips in to help if we are short. There are always clothes coming in for children. Her household furnishings are certainly not of the best, but recently they moved into a project, the dream of every slum family and there they sleep on mattresses on the floor because the wages of Francisco are not enough for furniture again and they had worn out their old. Like all hospital workers he has no more than thirty dollars a week take-home pay, and that to support Maria and four children. Here is poverty but not unhappiness. There are schools for the children, and free medical care for the family, and all the little comforts and luxuries which spill over in a big city. (One of our staff furnished her first home after marriage with the bits of furniture which are put out even in the slum areas to be carted away by the garbage disposal men.)

Pilar

But another story of utter horror and tragedy gives some indication of the destitution of a new people like the Puerto Ricans coming into the city and living on starvation wages and in noisy slums. It happened about a mile away from us. Pilar could speak no English and was a violently emotional young woman who was not too attractive and was always getting into fights and arguments. She went to make a telephone call at a neighboring tavern to find out if her two older children had arrived at the agency which was to take them to camp for a few weeks. The telephone was defective, she lost her dime, had no other and began to make a scene with the bartender which ended with screams and kickings and led to police action. The officers' arrival meant terror for Pilar who was dragged hysterical into a police car and taken away to a psychiatric ward at Bellevue where her behavior was such that she was given heavy sedation. Evidently no one on the ward spoke Spanish and she could not make herself understood and the next few days were an utter horror for her, leading only to more hysteria. It was only when a relief worker who had Pilar on her "case-load" came and pushed in the unlocked door of the little one-room apartment, that two infants were found dead in their cribs of starvation and thirst. How can such things be? First I speak of overcrowding and yet here was a case where Pilar herself guarded her one-room shelter and neighbors did not come in. If the children had wailed, their voices were feeble and could not be heard above the din of traffic and radio and television.

In our front building on Mott Street a little child had once pulled a pot of boiling soup off the stove and over herself and no one but her family had heard her screams what with the noise of the slums.

Ah, the pain, the anguish, the sin and despair, the remorse, at not living as one knows one should live, as a human being should live, fully and abundantly. The poor feel guilty too. It has been dinned into them so often that here we have a land of opportunity, of equality, of abun-

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dance. What is wrong with them that they cannot get out of the morass, they wonder.

ONE OF THE SADDEST things about the poor and the destitute is that they are blamed for it too. Everything is expected of them. "If you would do this—" "This is what I would do if I were in your place—"

Yes, we know the poor and the destitute, from twenty-eight years of close association, and if we did not have so many social theories, if we did not constantly proclaim our philosophical anarchism, and our non-violent pacifist means by which we sought to attain it, we might have come a little closer to "Fields, Factories and Workshops" and "The Conquest of Bread." These are the two books of Kropotkin which Peter Maurin, our French peasant founder of the Catholic Worker movement very often quoted as texts. He also talked constantly on "the art of human contacts," and man's freedom which must impel him, rather than the use of force. And because Peter Maurin was a saint, as well as a social thinker, we keep to his program, which we feel is fundamentally sound and holy, and so we have not, in these short twenty-eight years, been able to found any true cooperative farms, though there are a goodly number of houses. Perhaps if we would stop talking about our principles of personal responsibility which do not allow us to take state aid or endowments from foundations, which we consider money stolen from the worker and the poor, we might have been able to accomplish more.

"To make the rich poor and the poor holy" (that is, whole men) that is what the late Eric Gill, artist-philosopher, said should be our aim. It is a life-time work. Meanwhile we are free and freedom is an inestimable treasure.

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NEW YORK IN THE THIRTIES

Some Fragments of Memory

Irving Howe

Growing up in New York during the thirties meant, for me, the Jewish slums of the East Bronx, endless talk about Hitler, money worries of my parents migrating to my own psyche, public schools that really were schools and devoted teachers whose faces lived in memory longer than their names, fantasies of heroism drawn from Austria and Spain to excite my imagination, the certainty bordering on comfort that I would never find a regular job, and above all, the Movement. At the age of 14 I wandered into the ranks of the socialist youth, as much from loneliness as conviction, and from then on, all through my teens and twenties, the Movement was my home and passion, the Movement as it ranged through the various left-wing, anti-Communist groups.

From the chilling distance of time I now ask myself: what did it mean, what do I really feel about those years in New York? And to my dismay I hardly know, there does not seem to be a total and assured perspective upon the past. Annoyed by those who have made a virtue out of scoffing at the generosities of their youth, one part of me would cry out that despite all the fanaticism and absurdity, it was good, vibrant with hope, an opening to vision. Another part, involved beyond retreat with the style of the problematic, cannot help remembering in terms of uneasiness and dismay. As I rummage through the past, all I can find are bits and pieces of that chaos which forms the true substance of life.

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New York did not really exist for us as a city, a defined place we felt to be our own. Too many barriers intervened, too many kinds of anxiety. In the thirties New York was not merely the vital metropolis, brimming with politics and contention, that has since become a sentimental legend; it was also brutal, ugly, frightening, the foul-smelling jungle that Celine would later evoke in *Journey to the End of the Night.* New York was the embodiment of that alien world which every boy raised in a Jewish immigrant home had been taught, whether he realized it or not, to look upon with suspicion. It was "their" city in ways that one's parents could hardly have explained, and hardly needed to; and later, once I had absorbed the values of the Movement, it became "their" city in a new and, as it seemed to me, deeper sense.

If someone had asked me in 1939 what I thought of New York, I

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would have been puzzled, for that was not the kind of question one worried in those days. It was quite as if I had been asked what I thought about my family: there seemed no choice but to accept the one I had, lamentable as it may sometimes have been, and I no more imagined that I would ever live—or be able to live—anywhere but in New York than that I could find myself a more fashionable set of parents. Provinciality breeds a determinism of its own, and the provinciality of New York in the thirties, which tended to regard a temporary meeting of ethnic cultures and social crises as if it were an unalterable fact of history, led us to suppose that only here, in New York, could one bear to live at all, yet that unless one were in total revolt the life of the city was mean, constricted, intolerable. For the city in its own right, as it actually was, we had little concern or sensitivity. Only in the mythology of the Movement did New York figure significantly for us, and there it took on a glamorous cast: for New York was always "the party center," no matter which party it was; here you could listen to the leaders and intellectuals, and here it was possible, usually, to fill a fair-sized hall so as to soften our awareness of how small and futile we were.

Yet there were places I knew intimately. In our very distance from the city—caused, I suspect, less by a considered "alienation" than by a difficulty of access, a puritanical refusal of possibilities, and an unacknowledged shyness beneath our pose of bravado—we made for ourselves a kind of underground city consisting of a series of stopping-places where we could ease the strain of restlessness and feel indifferent to our lack of money. In the winter there were the numberless "socials" given by branches of the Movement to raise funds for their headquarters, evenings I remember, perhaps inaccurately, as drab and awkward. There were the movies on 42nd Street where amid clouds of steam and stench our political virtue was compromised by sophisticated European art films. There were the free concerts at the Metropolitan Musum where—it was a matter of pride to know—the music was poor but one found a sort of comfort in sitting on the marble floors, snuggling together in a chosen arc of relaxation, and allowing our romanticism to find a sanctioned outlet in Beethoven and Schubert.

IN RETROSPECT what strikes me as remarkable is that while we thought of ourselves as exposed to the coldest winds of the coldest capitalist city—and in many, many ways we were—we still lived in a somewhat sheltered world. Not only because the Movement had a way of turning in upon itself, becoming detached and self-contained, and finding a security in that isolation which all its speeches bemoaned. But more. Only now do I see the extent to which our life, for all that we had decided to cut ourselves off from official society, was shaped first by the fact that many of us came from immigrant Jewish families and second by the fact that in New York the Jews still formed a genuine community reaching half-unseen into a dozen neighborhoods and a multitude of institutions, within the shadows of which we found protection of a kind.

Attitudes of tolerance and permissiveness, feelings that one had to

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put up with and indulge one's cranks, eccentrics, idealists and extremists, affected the Jewish community to an extent that those profiting from them did not always stop to appreciate. And the Jewish labor movement, ranging from the garment workers unions to the large fraternal societies and small political groups, had established a tradition of protest, controversy and freedom, so that even when such organizations violated this tradition, it still exerted an enormous moral power in the Jewish community and provided cover for the left-wing parties. Trotskyist street meetings were sometimes broken up, but only upon the decision of the Communist party, which until the Popular Front prided itself on standing outside the spectrum of Jewish ideological life. In the garment center things were of course different, and there, in the bitter struggles between left and right unions, knives were wielded with a supreme indifference to race, creed, color or size. But the Jewish neighborhood was prepared to listen to almost anyone, with its characteristic mixture of skepticism, interest and amusement.

Even among the Stalinists the fact of Jewishness counted in surprising ways. I remember one evening when a street meeting was being harassed by a gang of Jewish Stalinists, and a screeching lady heckler jostled a friend of mine, causing her glasses to fall and break. My friend started bawling that her mother would beat her for breaking the glasses, and the Jewish lady, suddenly sympathetic, took the girl to a store and bought her a new pair. For the Communist lady my friend had a few minutes earlier been a "fascist" but when trouble came and the glasses were broken, she also must have seemed like a nice Jewish girl. . . .

It was not only the Jewish labor movement that provided a protective aura; the Jewish community did the same thing, though less from political principle than from what I would hesitantly call ethnic shrewdness. In the thirties the ordinary New York Jew realized that Jewishness was not something one had much choice about, and in this respect his instincts were sounder, both morally and practically, than that of the radicals who chose for their "party names" almost anything that did not sound Jewish. You might be shouting at the top of your lungs against reformism or Stalin's betrayals, but for the middle-aged garment worker strolling along Southern Boulevard you were just a bright and cocky Jewish boy, a talkative little *pisher*.

The Jewish community enclosed one, not through choice as much as through experience and instinct, and often not very gently or with the most refined manners. What you believed, or said you believed, did not matter nearly as much as what you were, and what you were was not nearly so much a matter of choice as you might care to suppose. If you found a job, it was likely to be in a "Jewish industry" and if you went to college it was still within an essentially Jewish milieu. We did not realize then how sheltering it was to grow up in this world, just as we did not realize how the "bourgeois democracy" at which we railed was the medium making it possible for us to speak and survive. It was all part of our mania for *willing* a new life, our tacit wish to transform deracination from a plight into a program.

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Thinking about it now, I am struck by how little I saw as a boy in the thirties of hunger and suffering, though surely there was no lack of either in New York and I was quite prepared to notice both. I knew, of course, the shacks of Hooverville on Riverside Drive, the lines of people waiting before store-fronts rented by the welfare agencies, the piles of furniture on top of which sat the children of evicted tenants, the panhandlers slouching on Fourteenth Street, the idle men standing day after day near the rowboats of Crotona Park. But while the East Bronx was a place of poverty, it kept an inner discipline: Jews felt obligated to look after each other, they fought desperately to avoid going on relief, they would treat with the outer world only under extreme duress.

I have said that the movement was my home and passion. Yes; but the forces that shaped one, the subtle enveloping conditions that slowly did their work on character and disposition, were not really matters of choice. The world I never made, made me.

2

There never seemed any place to go. The thought of bringing my friends home was inconceivable, for I would have been as ashamed to show them to my parents as to show my parents to them. I had enough imagination to suppose that each could see through the shams and limitations of the other, but not enough courage to defend one against the other. Besides, where would people sit in those cramped apartments? The worldly manner, the *savoir faire* of Monroe High School and then of the city colleges, that was affected by some of my friends would have stirred flames of suspicion in the eyes of my father; the sullen immigrant kindliness of my parents would have struck my friends as all too similar to that of their own fathers and mothers; and my own self-consciousness, which in relation to my parents led me into a maze of superfluous lies and trivial deceptions, made it difficult for me to believe in the possibility of a life grounded in simple good-faith. I could not imagine bringing together the life that was given, with its sweet poignancy and embittered conflicts, and the life one had chosen, with its secret fellowship and sectarian vocabulary.

So we walked the streets, never needing to tell one another why we chose this neutral setting for our escape at evening. In the winter, when the Bronx is grey and icy, there were cafeterias in which the older comrades, those who had jobs or were on WPA, bought coffee while the rest of us filled the chairs. In the summer, after meetings, we would parade across the middle bulge of the Bronx from the tenements on Wilkins Avenue in the East to the forbidding apartment houses of the Grand Concourse on the West. I remember those night walks as carefree and relaxed, away from the pressures of family and politics, though always with some secret anxiety that I would get home too late—for my parents, in their sweet blind innocence, were more distressed by my irregular hours than my irregular opinions.

The streets would be empty, the summer nights cool, a kind of expansiveness would come over us. Our enemies slept, the world was ours.

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We would listen with pleasure to our professional jokester, full of panting malice as he raked every friend who happened not to be along, or to the brilliant leader who warmed us with his confidence. We would glide away in our Melvillian freedom, away from the frustrations of the Movement and the dreary thought of the next morning when, with mama's quarter in my pocket for carfare and lunch, I would be taking the subway to City College, prepared once again to cut the classes that had, I was entirely confident, nothing to teach me.

3

Someone always had a little money. I remember my friend M., who had a gift for picking up odd jobs and a passion for consuming ice cream sodas. Late one night, in the drab center of the Bronx, we passed by a little candy store whose owner had been sitting up in wait for a "sale." We went in, M. treated me to a soda and then returned to the storekeeper for a little more seltzer in his glass. The man stared at him in dismay, and M., no longer a budding Marxist theoretician but a nice roly-poly Jewish boy, said in great earnestness, "But I *always* get more seltzer with my sodas. . . ." The storekeeper turned wearily to his fountain, shrugging his Jewish shoulders as if his fragment of profit, the reward of his vigil, had just been dissolved in the bubbling glass.

4

To be poor is something that happens; to experience poverty is to gain an idea as to what is happening. Once my father's grocery store went bankrupt in 1930 and he became a "customer peddler" trudging from door to door with sheets and linens, we were often very poor, living together with uncles, aunts and grandmother to save rent. Yet I had no very acute sense of being deprived, or any notions that I was the victim of social injustice. It was simply that, for reasons beyond my comprehension or probing, things had changed unpleasantly. Only after I had begun to go to high school did the idea of poverty start creeping into my consciousness, and I learned to regard it with the familiar blend of outrage, shame and ambition. When I was thirteen or fourteen I began to buy a magazine that was printing Sherwood Anderson's reports about hunger in the North Carolina textile towns, and I would read these articles with tears of indignation, barely aware of the extent to which I was really feeling sorry for myself. The realization of what it meant to be poor I had first to discover through writings about poverty; the sense of my own handicap became vivid to me only after I had learned about the troubles of people I did not know. And surely this experience was typical.

5

Why did the Movement prove so attractive to young people? Or perhaps more to the point, why have those who left it found themselves romanticizing their youthful time as radicals?

It was not merely the power of ideology which bound one to the

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Movement. Ideology mattered, of course, but only the more ambitious among us really tried to master the intricacies of Marxist economics or Trotsky's critique of Soviet industrial policy. (In economics I was a complete bust, and to this day feel somewhat queasy when trying to remember the formulas of *Capital,* perhaps because they were taught in the Movement with the same talmudic rote which, years earlier, had characterized my disastrous Hebrew lessons. For a young Marxist in the thirties, the greatest ploy was a claim to be learned in economics, the science we faithfully praised as basic and secretly regarded as dismal.) Nor was it merely the magnetic pull of group life, with its enormous yet curiously satisfying demands upon our time and loyalty, that drew us so closely to the Movement. Almost all of us rebelled, at one point or another, against the exhausting routine of political activism—so much of it meaningless and calculated to force upon us an understanding of our distance from American politics.

No, what I think held young people to the Movement was the sense that they had gained, not merely a "purpose" in life, but far more important, a coherent perspective upon everything that was happening to us. And this perspective was something rather different from, a good deal more practical and immediate than, Marxist ideology; it meant the capacity for responding quickly and with a comforting assurance to events. The Movement gave us a language of response and gesture, the security of a set orientation—perhaps impossible to a political tendency that lacked an ideology but not quite to be identified with ideology as such. It felt good "to know." One revelled in the innocence and arrogance of knowledge, for even in our inexpert hands Marxism could be a powerful analytic tool and we could nurture the feeling that, whether other people realized it or not, we enjoyed a privileged relationship to history. The totalism of the Marxist system seemed attractive not merely because we wanted a key to all the doors of knowledge (most of which we never tried to open), but also because there was a keen pleasure in picking up a copy of the *New York Times* and reading it with that critical superiority, that presumptive talent for giving a "basic" interpretation to events, which our commitment enabled us to command. And if we were often mistaken, we were surely no more so than most other people.

But there is a more fundamental reason for the appeal of the Movement. Marxism involves a profoundly *dramatic* view of human experience. With its stress upon inevitable conflicts, apocalyptic climaxes, ultimate moments, hours of doom and shining tomorrows, it appealed deeply to our imaginations. We felt that we were always on the rim of heroism, that the mockery we might suffer at the moment would turn to vindication in the future, that our loyalty to principle would be rewarded by the grateful masses of tomorrow. The principle of classic drama, *peripetia* or the sudden reversal of fortune, we stood upon its head quite as Marx was supposed to have done to Hegel; and then it became for us a crux of our political system. The moment would come, our leaders kept assuring us and no doubt themselves, if only we did not flinch, if only we were

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ready to remain a tiny despised minority, if only we held firm to our sense of destiny. It was this pattern of drama which made each moment of our participation seem so rich with historical meaning.

6

Were we so entirely wrong? The ways in which we were, are now obvious and if there is one middle-aged literary man or journalist who has failed to point them out I do not know his name. Our hopes and expectations were not realized, and concerning those that were crudely tainted by power-hunger it is perhaps just as well that they were not. But this is not at all to say, as so many people now do, that the radical outlook of the thirties was a mere fantasy or rested upon a failure to apprehend the realities of American society. There *were* millions of people desperate, hungry, hopeless; the society *was* sick and inhumane; people who cared nothing about ideology also shared the desire for profound social and moral change. When we fought against the Stalinist theory of "social reformism" we were partly responding to ideological disputes in Russia but also trying to cope with a form of political adventurism that threatened to destroy the trade unions of New York. When we endlessly debated "the class nature of Soviet Russia" in Webster Hall and Irving Plaza we were partly succumbing to a Marxist scholasticism but also trying to cope with the problem of a new kind of society, a problem that still bedevils serious students of politics. And when we thought in terms of catastrophe and apocalypse . . . well, how many years did it take before catastrophe and apocalypse came to blacken the globe?

7

A Movement that raises in the imagination of its followers the vision of historical drama, must find ways of realizing the dramatic in the course of history. And so we lived in hopes of a reenactment that would be faithful to the severities of the Marxist myth and would embody once more in action the idea of October. Since we had, meanwhile, to suffer the awareness of our limitations, we found excitement—that poor substitute for drama—in the ceaseless round of faction fights.

Often enough these disputes concerned issues of genuine importance, in which the Movement found itself groping toward problems that most political analysts had not even begun to consider. Occasionally these disputes produced some vivid writing and speaking, in which the talents of the leaders, unable to find a public outlet, were expressed inwardly through polemic, wit and invective. But I think the factions fights had another purpose that we could not then acknowledge: they were charades of struggle, substitute rituals for the battles we could not join, ceremonies of "acting out." Through them we created our own drama in our own world.

Once these dialectical tournaments began, the opposing factions would line up their squads of speakers, like knights arrayed at both ends of the field. They would then batter away at each other to the point of

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exhaustion and hoarseness, and continue to enact the whole combat-pageant even after everyone had firmly taken his stand. One's capacity for endurance played an extraordinary role in these political war-games, and there were oldtimers who prided themselves on battle scars from the legendary faction fights—the days of the titans—in the old days, just as there were party leaders whose prestige rested not on their achievements as organizers or gifts as writers but on their reputed shrewdness in faction maneuvers. It was a somewhat specialized skill.

If at a discussion meeting there happened to be a maverick who wished to speak apart from the lists of the two factions, the decorum of democracy required that he be given the floor. The sophisticated adherents of both sides shared, however, an impatience to get him out of the way, so that unless he were an important member whom it was advisable to court, the orderly buffeting of dispute could be resumed quite as if he had never spoken at all. Both sides gained a kind of pleasure from watching these disputes move forward step by step, from jocular argument to fierce attack, from amiable preparation to split or near-split:—a drama in which the main fighters held to their fixed roles and seemed bound by the fatalities of an action quite as much as the protagonists of a classical play. Later it would all be repeated, a bit more crudely, in the local branches and then in the youth organization. One of my least happy recollections is that of meetings where eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds would hector each other with pat formulas as to whether Russia was "state capitalist" or "bureaucratic collectivist," hardly aware of the semantic and analytic difficulties in which they had become entangled, so puffed up were they with the vanity of rhetoric.

Years later, one hot night in Indiana, I had a bitter quarrel with Alfred Kazin about the intellectual quality of this life. He had used the phrase "sodden brilliance" to describe it and I had reacted with irritation, making the point that his phrase was a contradiction in terms. I must have been wounded by the accuracy of Kazin's thrust and by what I took to be his piety of manner; but now I cannot help seeing that "sodden brilliance" was a good description. For while the debates were frequently brilliant, there was also a heavy-handed sarcasm, a nasty and unexamined personal violence, and a lumbering scholasticism that would warrant the qualifying "sodden."

8

The Movement was a school in both politics and life, and much of what we know, both good and bad, we learned there. It made us sensitive to the decay and brutality of the modern world. It taught us to look upon social problems in terms extending beyond local or even national interests. It imbued us with an intense fascination for the *idea* of history, and if that brought intellectual dangers, they were probably worth facing. It trained us to think on our feet, and opened to us the pleasures of thrust and parry. And not entirely by intention, it led us to a strong feeling for democracy, if only because the harassments and persecutions to which we were subjected by the Communists per-

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suaded us to value freedom of thought more than we quite knew we did.

Yes, the Movement taught us to think, but "only along too well-defined and predictable lines." (I repeat this phrase from a comment a City College teacher once wrote on a Marxistic composition of mine. The phrase burnt itself into my consciousness, and hearing it can still make me blush. Later, having become a teacher myself, I found it a consoling memory when dealing with narrow-minded students.) What passed for thought among us was often no more than facility: we were clever and fast in responding to familiar cues, especially in arguments with Communists, but had little capacity for turning back with a critical eye upon our own assumptions. Against opponents who shared our essential beliefs we could argue well—too often confusing arguing well with thinking well—but against those who dared question our essential beliefs we were not nearly so effective. We were trained in agility rather than reflection, dialectic rather than investigation. We had a strong sense of intellectual honor, but only a feeble appetite for intellectual risk. And that is why we seldom became disturbed when a member questioned a tactical or strategic "line" of the Movement, but felt uneasy, as if sensing the threat of heresy, when he began to wonder about the more abstract and fundamental Marxist tenets. In my own case, a fleeting encounter with Robert Michels' book on political parties left me with a permanent feeling of uneasiness, which time and exposure sharpened into doubt.

At least as crippling as its refusal to examine first principles was the attitude of the Movement toward what we called "bourgeois thought." Perhaps the most insidious doctrine afflicting the radical world was the Leninist theory of the "vanguard party," the notion that we possessed the political truth, held the key to the future, and had, so to say, signed a pact with history for a 99-year lease on the privilege. Pride in belonging to the "vanguard" was an expression of, as also an incitement toward, a naive authoritarianism: I recall one youth leader riding on a Fifth Avenue bus and pointing to the skyscrapers with the remark: "Some day that will all belong to us. . . ." Such historic arrogance had its intellectual equivalents: a barely disguised contempt for the thought and learning of the past, an intolerance of divergent thought, a condescension toward "bourgeois scholars" who, it is true, occasionally accumulated valuable material but who lacked the depth interpretation that "only Marxism" could provide. It was a heady brew for young people, and some suffered a hangover for years.

9

Still, life had a way of asserting itself, and the reality was always far more complex and diverse than any possible description. Life would break through the crevices of our ideology and prompt us to unpolitical happiness and spontaneous feelings, it would tempt us with the delights of *avant garde* writing—I read *Axel's Castle* at 15, understood little of it, and profited greatly—and lure us to the discoveries of romantic love. Some of the leaders were intellectuals *manqué,* full of pomp and pretension; others were serious and gifted men, at least as serious and

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gifted as the writers and professors I later came to know. When I try to summon an image of human goodness in its more public aspect, I still find myself remembering an ill-favored curmudgeon in the Bronx as selfless as he was grumpy, a girl in Brooklyn who poured the purity of her soul into the hope for socialism, a peculiarly mixed group of people whom I knew well or barely at all, yet who survive dimly as faces, those who enjoyed talking to "outsiders" about politics and those who were shy and would mail newspapers or fold leaflets in the office. For some the Movement was a mere stepping-stone to careers, a training school for political advisors to trade-union leaders, academic sociologists, free-wheeling literary critics; for most it was an experience both liberating and crippling, beautiful and ugly. . . .

Well, that was the New York I grew up in. It was neither typical of the city nor of American radicalism, it was simply mine.

10

It is all gone, and I do not want it back. There is nothing I desire more than a revival of American radicalism, but the past is done with, and I have no wish to recreate it nor any belief in the possibility of doing so. With time I hope that it will yet settle into coherence for me—more coherence than these notes reveal—and that I will learn to look back with peace and good feeling. There are moments now and again when I recall the life of New York in the thirties, and see it through the lens of affection; and then it all seems pure in the light of time, I feel with pleasure the old stirrings of faith and conviction, that love for the unborn future which may redeem the past.

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NEW YORK CITY: A REMEMBRANCE

Lionel Abel

I had no desire to get to Jerusalem, no expectation of living in Athens, little interest in Rome. I was eighteen. What did I know then about Paris? My whole aim was to live in New York—where I have lived practically ever since.

New York was not across the sea, and once there, a human being could live. It was a city. It was The City. There was wickedness in it, there were women—maybe there was even one woman; there were people who talked about poetry—and people who actually wrote poetry, or who made paintings, the next best thing. Then, there were adventurers, millionaires, gangsters, characters—New York contained just about every sort of person.

Yes, I was once excited by this city—but that was long ago. I am less excitable nowadays. And often I wonder: what would New York as it is now mean to me, if I, again eighteen, were to come here for the first time? Would the city have the enchantment it did? I think not, and I blame the city for what it has become, rather than the young man I cannot possibly be again. . . .

THIRTY-TWO YEARS AGO there was Prohibition, and that, surely, is something one hardly longs to see restored. Still, there was a thrill, at the time, in just dropping into a gin mill to buy a beer. Today we have the crime syndicate; then, there were the gangsters, about whom, by the way, there was no mystery. Everyone knew who they were, they were pointed out to you, and never with alarm. In fact, the streets of New York were then safe at night. Happy days! I generally went to bed after dawn, and often spent midnight until morning walking. Down the dark streets, the silent streets. . . .

Let's see what is missing today: the ferry from Christopher Street to Hoboken, the Sixth Avenue El, the nice inexpensive rooms, the open buses on Fifth Avenue, the theaters on Forty-second Street, where you wouldn't go without top hat and white tie, the apartments you could move into easily. Those days everybody moved in October, and living in New York was almost a wandering from apartment to apartment. Like most of humanity, but much more pleasantly, you were on the march.

Oh, there were so many good things!

One of the best things was this: except for the museums, theaters and opera, all that was humanly essential to the city was bounded by

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Bleecker and Fourteenth Streets, by Second Avenue and Greenwich Street. There was no other residential section in New York. Those who lived outside this area were just pariahs—or did not even exist. There was no really good person then who would have wanted to meet the mayor; Wall Street might just as well have been in Illinois, and Madison Avenue was really a part of Ohio. New York City was Greenwich Village, it was e. e. cummings, it was Sam Schwartz's restaurant, it was Eugene O'Neill, it was the Provincetown Theater, it was the Sam Johnson where Eli Siegal recited Vachel Lindsay's *The Congo* or his own *Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana,* it was where Mark Twain once lived (nobody knew the house, but it was somewhere in the neighborhood), it was Romany Marie's where Bertrand Russell or John Cowper Powys might drop in to chat. You will notice that New York was certain people. And that's what a human community is, after all—certain people. What is New York today? Too many people for any of them to be interesting.

In addition to the persons of reputation, New York was at that time a certain number of people who had not done anything, but whom one was seriously urged to meet. There was the splendid fellow who had done nothing at all with his life, the woman who had done nothing with her dancing, the young man who had never stopped denying his great and evident gifts. And in each case, the reason the particular individual was wasting himself or herself was far more interesting than anything he or she could have done.

There was M. J., who at twenty-three was too beautiful to do anything. It was disgraceful to think of her having to do anything short of the most sacred work. Naturally, she refused to go to Hollywood, to which even Greta Garbo yielded. M. J. was really beautiful: hers was a beauty that made one shudder. She felt that just to exhibit such beauty was quite sufficient, she was giving more than others deserved. What did others give her? There was R. F.—a poet—who gave her his money and lived on practically nothing; then, in one violent act, he gave, and took back from her, everything: R. F. hanged himself. There was the novelist who was going to give her his novel when he had finished it—M. J. always referred to it as *her* novel, and must have regarded the author as he regarded his typewriter. . . . But if it takes a single moment of time to promise a beautiful woman a book, it takes many moments of unbeautiful time to write a book. The novelist published the novel under his own name and made a reputation. M. J. is not a young woman now. . . .

In the important part of New York, at that time, there was not a single person who had not once in his life looked exultant, exalted, or at the very least, distinguished There was not one person who had not at least once in his life said something which could be—and maybe was—repeated.

Washington Square Park, as I recollect, was not then a stronghold of democracy: you went there when you were tired of other places, and it was a pleasure to sit there and feel sad. No, there were no crowds in the park then, no music, no chess, no mothers, no children. The baby

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carriages did not begin to arrive until about 1935; until then, at night, you could sit for hours without seeing another person, and in the dark and the quiet, your thoughts became eloquent. Not always, to be sure.

But I do not want to give the impression that the New York of the period was a gentle city. On the contrary, people tended to be hard. In fact, I think they wanted to be hard. They were living up to an ideal of hardness.

An ideal like that, in the nature of the case, cannot but be short-lived. In a big city, the ideal of hardness, is only too quickly realized.

One of the first friends I made in New York was a semi-poetic quasi-criminal named Ricci. He wrote poetry and he pretended to be a hard guy, which in some ways he was. Here is an example of his friendship for me.

At about four in the morning we would sometimes stop into a coffee pot at the corner of Fourth and Cornelia Streets. There, over cornflakes and coffee, Ricci would talk to me in a very tough way about poetry. I admired the hard line he took about everything that had ever been written in verse, and also on the motive for writing verse of the people we knew who wrote it. I admired him for his relation to the gangsters who also dropped into the coffee pot about the same hour that we did. These gangsters were associated with a joint known as The Whoopee Club. In the early of the evening, they could be seen walking up and down Fourth Street soliciting customers. If a well-dressed man passed by they would call out after him: "For what you want, the best place is The Whoopee Club! It's on MacDougal Street!" This line met with success. Well-dressed men seen walking down Fourth Street were often seen, soon afterward, walking to MacDougal Street, where The Whoopee Club stood. This is what would happen there. The man would drink, and having drunk, be told that he had treated the whole house to champagne, and owed anything from one to ten thousand dollars, depending on his general air, and also, on the quality of his clothes. Told what he owed, the man would sign a check. But the owners of Whoopee were not born yesterday. They knew perfectly well that checks can bounce. To defeat this chance, Whoopee had its gangsters, whose role was to kidnap the man after he had signed his check, and detain him somewhere set up for the purpose until ten o'clock of the following morning, by which time the check would have been cashed. If it were a Saturday night, the signee would have to be detained until Monday, and if the night began on a holiday weekend, he might have to be kept under surveillance for two or even three days. Such was the practice. And the gangsters of Fourth Street were fully equipped for it. These were the men I admired Ricci for being acquainted with.

One of the gangsters did not admire me, and on several occasions expressed himself to this effect. I wondered about what I should do, and then one morning, without having come to a decision, I punched him on the jaw. He was confused by this, and threw a sugar bowl at me. The sugar bowl, happily, went wide of the mark. I launched another right and caught him squarely. I knew then that I could beat him if he fought

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fair. He realized this, too, and promptly kicked me in the balls. I passed out.

All this has interest now only for what followed. When I came to, the gangsters from The Whoopee Club were split into two factions, and as I lay on the floor of the coffee pot they argued out the ethics of what had been done to me. One faction, supporting me, maintained, pointing to Joey, the gangster who had laid me out: "Joey shouldn't have kicked him in the balls." The other faction held to the doctrine: "Hands don't count." Finally, both factions turned to my friend Ricci, who sitting at the counter sipping his coffee, was surveying the whole scene sarcastically. They asked, "Ricci, which of us is right?" I, like the gangsters, waited for Ricci's answer. After some thought, he said, pointing to the gangster who had kicked me: "I think Joey is wrong for not understanding him." Him was me. Then Ricci said: "But I think Joey is right for wanting to kill him." Ricci was one of the first friends I had made in New York. As for the gangsters, they said with one voice, "You see, hands don't count." And their moral problem was solved. But do gangsters nowadays have moral problems? Certainly this incident could not occur today. It is really in the past. . . .

CAME CHANGE: the Wall Street crash and the depression which spread out after it over the entire country. In the richest city of the world there were bread lines. Bob Clarmont, the poet who had inherited, three years before, a million dollars from a wealthy man he had saved from drowning was discovered by newspaper men and photographed standing on line with the poor, his money spent, waiting for soup. The parks began to fill with the unemployed. The wealth of the city hid itself—in vaults, in banks, in foreign banks; no human being has ever learned to hide the way money can. The city was not poor, but it was in disgrace. Everyone became ashamed of himself. To start with, the unemployed. Those who could not employ them became ashamed, too. And the rich became ashamed: for everyone not rich attacked them. And the attackers became ashamed, for their attacks were not bringing results. I think this period represents the beginning of New York City's decline.

One day I ran into Paddy O., a gangster who had played a star role during Prohibition in the doings of The Whoopee Club. The club was no more, and the gangster was completely disorientated. He had tried to hi-jack a beer truck, absorbed several bullets, and lost almost a hundred pounds. He hailed me in the street as if I were an old friend—the last time I had seen him before that, he was exclaiming: "Hands don't count!"—and asked me to do him a favor. He wanted me to write a letter to a leading W.P.A. official whom he had come to know in this way: Paddy O. had detained the man—not then high in W.P.A. councils—over a Labor Day weekend so that The Whoopee Club would be able to cash a check the man had been forced to sign. It appears that the newly exalted W.P.A. official had made a number of passes at Paddy O., who had slugged him with appropriate indignation. I was to recall the incident to the official, and in such a way that the latter would be able

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to recollect it pleasantly, and offer the gangster who had slugged him a W.P.A. job. Yes, this was a new New York.

Hart Crane, who had celebrated New York in *White Buildings,* may have felt that the ship bringing him from Mexico, where he had gone on a Guggenheim, was taking him to a city he could no longer understand. He jumped into the Atlantic. Certain lines in his first book of poems give the essence of the pre-swing, pre-political, ragtime rhythm of the New York City which was then on the brink of an altogether new adventure:

> And you can fall downstairs with me
> With perfect grace and equanimity.

The most important people in the city, those who had lived between Bleecker and Fourteenth Street, between Greenwich Street and Second Avenue, began to move. Some went uptown, some to Brooklyn. Finally, the city itself moved. Of course, everyone knew it would do something. And it did. A great thing, an incredible thing, what was perhaps its last great act. In its excitement and depression the city picked itself up and went to Russia. Yes, New York, not just one section of it, but New York City entire, with its boroughs and bridges and unions and businesses, its subways and skyscrapers and museums and tenements, its publishing houses and bookstores; from Sheepshead Bay through Washington Heights, from river to river, it went: the whole shebang.

Politically New York City then became the most interesting part of the Soviet Union. For it became the one part of that country in which the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky could be openly expressed. And was! And how!

Let it be noted that the movement of the city into the U.S.S.R. was unprecedented and unduplicated. No other great city followed New York. London did not, nor did Paris. And these were the "advanced" cities of the world. Also the movement of the city had cultural consequences, one being that the ideas of Trotsky acquired a meaningfulness in New York they never attained in any capital of Europe, or in any other city in the States. Kenneth Rexroth said to me recently: "I just walked away from the Stalin-Trotsky controversy." He was able to walk away from it—he was living in San Francisco. But how could one in New York?

The city began to speak—and to shout—at its street corners through political agitators. There were picket lines, demonstrations, meetings, arguments. The first of May became tense and interesting. Artists and writers began to court and be courted by political groups, to be herded into congresses, and, finally, into unions. I recall some friends of mine, whose writings were scarcely intelligible to me, shouting together during a May Day parade: "We write for the working class!"

The Empire State, the tallest building in the world, was then also the most vacant. In a penthouse on top lived one of its stockholders, Al Smith, former governor of the State; Smith had become reactionary, or

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as the Communist jargon put it, "confused." It is not hard to understand why he was. Slater Brown, in a poem published in the *New Republic,* described the ex-governor looking down from his apartment on top of the nearly empty building:

> Hearing from every hill and valley
> Strains of the Internationally.

People began to join parties and organizations. The result was that you tended to be treated as a member of a group even if you didn't belong to one. Just to protect yourself you joined up with somebody. After all, if you were in New York City, then you were a Russian; and you enjoyed more freedom in New York City than Russians not in New York City did. Why not use this freedom? I still cannot understand why most of the really "aware" people in the city did not become the followers of Trotsky. They did the very opposite and joined themselves with Stalin, whom they could have defied with impunity.

Not that the sole interest or activity of the city at that time was politics. A truer account of the matter would be to say that politics entered in some way into other activities. To give an example: a painter had managed to live in the Village for some years without ever paying his rent on time. But now he could not even hope to be late with his rent; he was without even the expectation of money. The landlord naturally was determined to evict him. A politically minded friend counselled the painter, "Resist." "How can I?" asked the painter. "All I can do is paint." "You can do something else," said the friend, "you can fight. And I know certain people who will help you." "Help me do what?" asked the painter helplessly. "They'll help you," said the friend. "Each time the evictors carry a piece of your furniture out into the street, to rot there for all they care, these friends of mine—and yours—will pick up that piece of furniture and carry it back into your apartment where it belongs. . . . And they'll give the evictors a good beating into the bargain." "Why should they? What did I do for them?" the painter asked. "Ah," said the friend, "you can do something. You can be on their side." Which side was that? Most of the time it was Stalin's. Once in a very long while it was Trotsky's. And a person might commit himself to a whole political program in the effort to save his furniture.

Of course, there was real political interest in the city, too. People began to read Marx and Lenin and to discuss economics, philosophy, dialectics. New careers opened up for people interested in and with a talent for radical action, radical thought. It was a shock for me to realize that one was no longer praised for expressing one's own ideas; the great thing then was to understand Marx's or Lenin's. I remember an anti-evictor I rather liked (he took a real joy in putting furniture back into apartments) praising someone for being a "crackerjack Marxist." Should I become a Marxist, I wondered, try to be a crackerjack at it, and win this fellow's admiration? The thought was not peculiar to me, it entered into the minds of most of the people I knew, and soon a

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moment came when there was no longer any question as to whether we were going or not going to be Marxists. The only remaining question was: which of us would be crackerjacks?

Harold Rosenberg took the view that Marxism was two things: it was Talmud, to be sure. But it was also Cabala. And he thought that the role of literary men should be to develop the arcane, cabalistic side of the Marxist doctrine. In his conversation, at least, he gave instances of what he had in mind; I shall never forget the evening when he proved that Helen of Troy—his argument involved both word magic and economic determinism—was really a loaf of bread! For my part, I thought a good contribution to Marxism would be the creation of a Marxist detective, who would solve crimes by calling upon dialectical materialism, even as G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown solved crimes by applying Catholic dogma. These projects remained just that. But there was a real intellectual achievement during the period. This was expressed not in literary theory but in art history. I am referring to the remarkable lectures on art given by Meyer Schapiro at Columbia and at the New School. Schapiro combined an extreme esthetic sensitiveness with great clarity of mind and social passion, and his discussion of painting, particularly modern painting, outclassed everything that was then being said or written about literature from a social point of view. And in the theater too there was achievement. We have heard recently that for three generations the secret dream of all writers in Russia has been to write like Chekhov; but to be free to do that and still remain in Russia, they would have had to live in New York, as Odets did, during the thirties. He wrote *Awake and Sing,* which comes brilliantly out of Chekhov's *Ivanov.*

THE CLIMACTIC EVENT of the period, from my point of view at least, was a political one. The Russian trials had taken place. Trotsky was accused of fascism and he was to make a speech over telephone from Mexico which was to be amplified by loudspeakers for an audience in the Hippodrome. Some six thousand people came to hear it, many of them Stalin supporters. Of course, Stalin's organization in Mexico was on the job. The telephone wires were cut and Max Shachtman, a leader of the Trotskyite organization, had to read Trotsky's speech, a copy of which, fortunately, had been prepared. Trotsky—through Shachtman—declared that he would stake his life on the judgment of an impartial committee of inquiry which could study the evidence the Stalinists had collected against him. Later, when such a committee, headed by John Dewey, was formed, Trotsky tore all the evidence against him to shreds, and at this date not even Khrushchev pretends to take it seriously. As for the audience in the Hippodrome, it was shaken, down to its Communist Party members. Not that the speech changed history. But at least we can say now that on one occasion during the thirties Trotsky's words were uttered magnificently in the Soviet Union—if only in the part of it that was New York City at the time.

The W.P.A. workers in the parks kept them clean, the subways

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were tidy and without incident. The streets were still safe at night. I lived for a while at Seventy-fifth Street off Central Park West, and on hot summer nights would go with a girl friend to Central Park for a swim in the lake. We would throw our clothes on the grass and jump in. If we had any fear then, it was that a policeman would come by.

Then Stalin signed a pact with Hitler. And it was the shock of this event, I think, which started New York City, bitter and demoralized, back from the U. S. S. R., to America. Certainly it was as hard for the city to leave Russia as it had been to go there. Back home, but not at home, uneasy and ideologically depressed, the city then, like the rest of the world, submitted to shock after shock: the Russian attack on Finland, the Nazi attack on Poland, the defeat of France, the battle of Britain, the assassination of Trotsky, the Nazi attack on Russia, finally Pearl Harbor.

Came the blackout. Came the first delinquents onto the darkened streets. Came the assassination of Carlo Tresca, still unpunished. Came the black market in food, then in babies. Came guilt to the city, which was still safe, though Rotterdam and London had been hit, and Warsaw, Belgrade, Leningrad, and Moscow. Came guilt to its inhabitants who were still unscathed, while others were fighting and dying. Came the psychoanalysts, many of them refugees. Came the refugees, many of them painters: Chagall, Helion, Leger, Miro, Max Ernst, Tanguy, Masson, Matta. Came André Breton, with his courtliness, rages, and pure, musical French. Came the Puerto Ricans, invisibly, and not to be seen in their full consequence until about fifteen years later. Came the desire to get out of New York once the world fracas was over.

In the late forties almost everyone I knew in New York got sick of the person nearest to him or her. Arshile Gorky moved to Connecticut, and hanged himself in his studio. Married people broke off. Mary McCarthy has said of this period that it was a time of liberation. I disagree. It was during this period that people began to give up the values they had held to; also their friends. A brilliant novelist subjected her most intimate acquaintances to the terror of her sarcastic style. The whole period stood under the sign of Hemorrhage. Matta tried to stop the general trend, of which he himself was part and symptom, by making a painting with the wonderful title: "Stop the Age of Hemorr!"

New York City at that time had become for me little more than the streets over which a taxicab would take me to a boat leaving for Paris.

WHAT IS NEW YORK TODAY? It has a beauty, to be sure, at least when seen at night from a speeding car, from a penthouse very high up—or from the deck of a ship taking you away from it. Close up, in its dirty details, in the noise and haste of the streets, in its congestion of cars and men, it is most unlovely; who can like it? Who can like its lack of open spaces? Your eye can never rest, but must always be thrust against something solid. And who can like the city's straight-streetedness, simple-mindedness, rudeness, slovenliness; who can like what is happen-

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ing to the language here, deteriorating even faster than the subway system,—who can like the cadence of the human voice in New York, or like what is happening to the human personality?

The city has become too big, it is overgrown, it now impedes rather than aids those who grow up in it. Its schools have broken down, its administration is unwieldy, inefficient, corrupt. New York cannot clean its streets. It has become afraid of the snow.

And there is no one in the city with enough power to chasten it. This city is irresponsible—but was it not always so? And did not its very irresponsibility make it at one time brilliant, interesting, unique—what great city beside New York went off to spend almost a whole decade in another country?

But no city has ever endured except by fostering the kind of virtues New York City never had. Its irresponsibility today is expressed not positively at all, but negatively—as waste, dishonor, unconcern, dirt.

The city may disintegrate, it may die. There is no group here now with the disposition or the force to save it. And were it saved from itself, it would be a different city, not the New York we have known, which was always excessive, wanton.

So New York is mortal, as mortal as we are, there is not a hint of eternity in it as in other great cities, its stones and glass and steel have no touch of the sacred; it has a pathos like ours, it is entirely of time; what if its time has run out?

Maybe it is even more vulnerable than we are. Certainly if war comes New York will not escape destruction. We as individuals might get out of it, go somewhere else and be safe. The city will have to stay and face the hydrogen music, to which, by the way, through its scientists, it will have contributed. Did it not give the name of its best borough to the first atom bomb project?

But even if war does not come, and it may not, this city cannot grow as it once did. It must now change into something else. Shall we turn from it, despise it, as we watch its former qualities converted into faults? Shall we take a hand in changing it? In making it like other cities, and one, too, that will not reflect our own image? Should we not rather lament the passing of something extraordinary, which perhaps will never be seen again?

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REAL ESTATE CONFIDENTIAL

Daniel M. Friedenberg

I

The most striking fact about New York in the last decade is the realty boom. Wherever one goes—in the heart of old Manhattan or the farther outskirts of the Bronx and Staten Island—construction is seen. Craters yawn in what were pleasant meadows, metallic booms and tiers of steel loom against the sky, overhead bridges span entire sidewalks with scaffolding and the pressure hammer constantly gnaws at the vitals of the pavement. It would seem that nothing is spared in this massive demolition and rebuilding. Old trees and young buildings enter the same insatiable maw; for neither leafy elms nor elegant Park Avenue structures can withstand the path of progress as conceived by builders.

It must bewilder the senses of the spectator, this awesome chopping down and regurgitation of concrete and steel. Why are stately edifices barely thirty years old uprooted for squat ribbon-windowed office structures? Why are new massive apartment houses crowded jowl to jowl, blocking out air and light, when even the atrophied organs of the city dweller still feel joy at a shaft of sunshine? And, most of all, where do the tenants come from to fill the wave on wave of new apartments and office buildings? With rents frozen at approximately $20-30 in the older houses, while the new apartments charge an average closer to $60 per room for lower ceilings and cheap partitions; with older commercial space renting at an average of about $3 per square foot while the newer office buildings demand almost double—what is behind this boom?

The author of this article has participated in the postwar building frenzy from its inception. He has watched its legitimate start, when the city woke from a depression lethargy and war immobility, to erect new housing for the generation of war brides and new offices equipped with air-conditioning, acoustical ceilings and fluorescent lighting. He has seen the maturity of the boom, as shifts in racial population have altered the residential character of whole boroughs and the needs of expanding business have integrated many out-of-town companies into the financial web of the metropolis. And he has now begun to observe a repetition of the overbuilding of the 1920s in which, like fabled Midas whose touch turned everything to gold, the city will throttle itself.

To understand why the builders have had such a field day in New York City and continue to build without reference to actual space needs, skyrocketing land values and ever higher construction costs, the economic

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background must be examined. Building is a favored industry, comparable in some respects to oil drilling from the point of view of accelerated depreciation, and stock market speculation in so far as capital gains are concerned. The tax structure is deliberately keyed to subsidize the rich and acquisitive, who then find themselves compelled by the very logic of this favoritism to expand and expand again without reference to the market needs; and let the devil take the hindmost!

The factors that stand behind this favoritism can be simply enumerated: land appreciation, the leasehold device, tax-free accelerated depreciation, new complex methods of financing, the development of the syndicate, juggling of space measurement, "escalation" clauses and maintenance charges, and the use of capital gains. This study will concern itself primarily with private enterprise and not public housing nor the very genuine efforts of organizations like the United Housing Corporation, the non-profit group run by Abraham Kazan, whose efforts have accomplished more in building decent apartments for the middle class in New York City than all the speculative builders put together.

II

LAND—It is undoubtedly true that many of the old American fortunes originated in land speculation. The Astors, Goelets, Rhinelanders and Schermerhorns profited by the tremendous expansion of New York City in the early part of the nineteenth century. A possibly apocryphal story illustrates the technique. John Jacob Astor offered to sell a Wall Street lot for $8,000 in 1810. A buyer, surprised at the low price, promptly appeared.

"Yes, you are astonished," Astor was reported to have said. "But see what I intend to do with the eight thousand dollars. That Wall Street lot, it is true, will be worth twelve thousand dollars in a few years. But I shall take the eight thousand dollars and buy eighty lots above Canal Street and by the time your one lot is worth twelve thousand dollars, my eighty lots will be worth eighty thousand dollars."

In our time, however, the big money in real estate rarely enters land speculation. The leisurely approach, waiting five to ten years for land appreciation, does not fit the tempo of modern life. Only the very rich, mindful neither of temporary losses nor income taxes, can afford this outlook. The government has taken the position that since buildings age, a certain part of their cost may be allowed as a tax-free deduction each year. This is known as depreciation. But the tax authorities refuse to allow depreciation on land itself, following the sound theory that land cannot wear out. As a result, investment in land for the sake of future appreciation is limited either to very small endeavors or to the extremely powerful who think in terms of generations rather than of their annual tax return.

Certain old estates still follow this approach: the Astors and Goelets are still with us. The Astor Estate, for example, anticipated the development of Park Avenue as a financial community and purchased several large plots between 46th and 59th Streets in the 1940s. The Aramco

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Building, constructed by the Uris Brothers as the first large postwar building, was erected on Astor land. The Goelet Estate acquired the blockfront on the south side of 42nd Street between Lexington and 3rd Avenues, on which the Galbreath interests erected the Socony Mobil Building. And, in a continuing process, the Astors are now investing in land to the East of Park Avenue in the 50s, while the Goelet heirs have acquired a large plot directly facing the Lincoln Square project.

No special genius is required to foresee such developments. The future of Park Avenue above Grand Central was clearly understood by most old-time investors, as is the future value of land in areas directly abutting the present midtown nexus. It is still possible to buy land located in proximity to Lincoln Square for about $35 a foot, which should certainly triple in value within the decade. But only the very rich can afford to make such investments, for they require enormous outlays of cash, rarely can be mortgaged to a significant extent and usually show a carrying loss.

Sometimes, of course, land speculation does produce fabulous profits. From the small truck farmer whose lot on Staten Island happens to sit adjacent to the bridge now being built over the Narrows to Brooklyn, to the Bronx junk dealer whose yard abuts the junction of the Hutchinson River Parkway with the Cross Bronx Expressway, we are all familiar with such luck. But there are other examples in which more than blind chance is involved. In one case (the specific location and exact details shall remain nameless for obvious reasons), a speculator netted a cool million dollars in cash for six months of control. A large plot in a key part of Manhattan remained covered with rundown buildings for many years. A speculator bought one part of the plot for $600,000. He held on for almost a decade and then, in disgust, sold at a loss of $200,000 to another speculator who suddenly appeared. One month later a tremendous development was announced for the entire area, which required the acquisition of the part of the plot in question. The man who had stepped in for $400,000 insisted on and received a price of $1,400,000! Even the most charitable spirit has doubts as to the background of this transaction.

LEASING—While the old estates specialize in buying land and leasing it after an appreciation in value, it is the "new money" which concentrates on the acquisition of these leases. Men like the Uris Bros., Erwin Wolfson and the Tishmans have skyrocketed into multimillionaires within short years by realizing the unique advantages of leased land or what is called a leasehold.

While no depreciation is allowed on land, both the leasehold rent for the land and the depreciation on the building itself are tax deductible when a building is constructed on a leasehold. The overwhelming advantage of the leasehold (until 1958*) was that the person leasing could depreciate or write off the entire building cost during the first term of

* The law has been changed on this point, but the problem can be solved, in the majority of cases, by other methods too complicated to describe here.

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the lease, usually 21 years. The government further allowed accelerated depreciation, meaning that the largest part of the cost could be written off in the early years. Under the 200% declining balance method, for example, the depreciation allowance can be doubled (hence 200%). If a leasehold runs for 21 years, the annual depreciation allowance is thus almost 5%—that is to say, the period of years of the leasehold divided into one hundred per cent—which when doubled, means that the builder receives close to 10% of his money tax-free each year in the early years!

Nor is this all. Depreciation is allowed against the entire building cost whereas the builder invests at the maximum about one-third of the total cost, the rest being covered by a mortgage or mortgages. In effect, the builder thus receives an annual tax-free return of up to 30%; since 10% is tax-free and the equity or actual cash investment of the builder is only one-third, the total tax-free amount is enlarged three times. And this is before figuring his actual profit from renting!

It can readily be understood why New York City is rebuilding at such a frantic rate. The builder makes a profit "coming and going": from the government as accelerated tax-free depreciation; and into his pocket as normal profit from rent collection.

The leasehold is fantastically profitable, but there is still another method to increase the return over and above both depreciation allowance and rent income. This is known as the collapsible corporation, a device only recently authorized. In essence, the government allows a builder to liquidate his corporation after holding a piece of property for three years and a day, and then taxes him only 25% on his capital gains. He thus escapes double taxation, first on the normal profit and then on dividends.

A certain Mr. X., to take an actual example, built an apartment house in the East 50s several years ago. He set up a new corporation for a $60 fee. He borrowed what seemed 65% of the money for the job from an insurance company, but in reality the mortgage represented over 80% of the cost; his architect and engineer supported the inflated estimate, for otherwise they would not get his next job. Then, with only a 20% investment of his money, he sought and received double depreciation on the completed structure, in this particular case running even higher since he broke the building down by what is called the "components" method and depreciated the elevators, roof, air conditioning, etc., at a still faster rate. Just recently he sold the apartment at a high profit to a syndicate, liquidating his corporation in order to pay a single capital gains tax. The result is that he received an annual tax-free return of over 30%, his investment, in effect, being returned in three years through the depreciation alone, above and beside the profit from rent, and then sold at another high additional profit subject only to a tax of 25%!

If the speculator can manage to build in his individual name or that of a partnership, the profits are again enhanced, since he can apply the depreciation against his own total income, which is usually taxed higher than the corporate level. Erwin Wolfson, for example, leased land from Columbia University on a short term lease and constructed 100 Church

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Street. Assuming a 5% accelerated depreciation factor (very conservative under the circumstances) on a $10 million construction job, Mr. Wolfson had a legitimate tax-free deduction averaging somewhat less than one-half million dollars annually to apply against his personal income tax for the next few years. As the principal owner of Diesel Construction Company, the largest construction company in New York City, and the sponsor of Grand Central City, which will be the largest office structure in the world (now renamed Pan Am Building for its principal tenant), Erwin Wolfson presumably found this deduction of use.

FEE BUILDING—The classical method of construction is to buy the land outright, called the fee simple, and then build. Its disadvantage is that the builder has money invested in the land as well, a non-depreciable item. This is to a degree compensated for by the fact that mortgages tend to give more money to fee builders than leasehold builders, feeling their investment to be more secure with the former. The variations by which speculators have achieved success with this method are as infinite as the cunning of the human mind. Sam Rudin, an old-time builder whose development of Washington Square North sparked the postwar boom in Greenwich Village, decided to erect a mammoth office building. He bought a plot, now called 80 Pine Street, and projected a structure of almost 900,000 square feet. But he was unable to get financing, because the area was somewhat east of the financial district and the mortgagees had doubts as to its success. The Chase Manhattan Bank, which had sold him the plot, was concerned. They did not want to get back the land. Furthermore, since the First National City Bank and the Hanover Bank had announced plans to move a major part of their operations to the midtown area, the Rockefellers wanted 80 Pine Street to reinforce their tremendous investment in the Chase Manhattan Plaza, only two blocks away. The upshot was that Chase Manhattan rented enough space in 80 Pine Street to enable Mr. Rudin to acquire financing.

Very often the builders end up working for the mortgagees. The Tishmans at 666 Fifth Avenue and the Minskoffs at 575 Lexington Avenue—second generation builders both, whose families have been identified with midtown construction for 50 years—were staggering under the load of the tremendous equities involved. The Prudential Insurance Company, which had indicated an interest in providing mortgage money, obligingly bought the two buildings before they were completed and leased them back to the builders. The result is that the Tishmans and Minskoffs make large sums operating the buildings which belong, however, to the Prudential Insurance Company.

There is as much skullduggery behind many of these deals as in the most sinister novels; and far more is at stake. One reads that gunmen can be hired to murder individuals for a few thousand dollars; those on the inside of realty laugh at such petty antes. Several years ago, for example, a large financial institution was approached by a speculative builder who thought the institution might be interested in letting him develop a property which it owned. The builder asked his structural engineer to

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draw preliminary plans for a new building. The engineer, rich in his own right, was a partner in one of the largest realty syndicates. The next week a very important man, of the same social background as the president of the financial institution, arranged a meeting through which the realty syndicate got the job. The speculator with the original idea was left out in the cold, and it was not until several years later, when his structural engineer fired a draftsman, that the truth came out.

Another case of the ruthlessness pervading this struggle for money is one involving a principal corner in downtown Manhattan. An investment builder was going to build on an inside plot when it struck him that a large insurance company, occupying the adjacent corner building, was in need of additional space. He reasoned that by combining his plot with the other, he would create a better structure and satisfy the growing needs of the insurance company as well. But the insurance company refused to sell, offering to lease instead. The deal was arranged but problems arose because of the difficulty of mortgaging a combined fee simple and leasehold. The insurance company refused to sign the lease, though it kept on assuring the investment builder it would honor its commitment. The latter, getting deeper and deeper, without money and unable to arrange temporary relief because of the unsigned leasehold, was eventually forced to sell out at a loss to the insurance company, which then used the same plans and proceeded to erect the structure. This building, when fully rented, will net close to $400,000 per year in profit!

Perhaps the most startling case of banditry in the history of New York City real estate occurred very recently. A tremendous apartment project, occupying a magnificent location in the center of Manhattan's East Side, has just been completed. Its history is unusual. Several years ago one of the City's most prominent builders decided to go ahead with this project. He spent a large sum for the land. By the time he sought financing the money market, in one of its perennial swings, had become very tight. No matter what the builder did, he was unable to raise money.

Finally this builder turned in despair to that private market of vultures that always wheel in the financial air, looking for dying victims. These are the very rich men who for a price save propositions by investing a certain sum of money, taking back a large interest. He found one such gentleman who was willing to give aid. The terms were that the new party would lend $3 million for a short period of time, until a package deal of financing could be arranged, and in return receive 50% interest in the mammoth job.

The new participant thereupon approached his banks and borrowed $3 million at 6% interest. This new equity money enabled the job to proceed. The money market soon loosened up and financing was arranged. The terms of this new financing were so liberal that $2 million of the $3 million was returned to the gentleman who had stepped in. To sum up, the new partner thus obtained a 50% interest in one of the largest apartment building projects in the history of New York for what amounted to 6% interest on $3 million for several months and 6% interest on $1 million for three years (his real equity money). The total inter-

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est will amount to some $200,000 and for this money he has obtained a permanent position in a magnificent project which should return his $1 million equity in short years and then show one-third of a million dollars annual return thereafter!

INTRICATE FINANCING—The above deals are comparatively simple. A piece of property is bought or leased and a building is constructed subject to a normal mortgage. The only widely known exception to this rule was the bond issuances that took place during the construction frenzy of the late 1920s. At that time it was common practice to issue bonds instead of mortgages, because more money could be obtained through this method. With the arrival of the depression, most of these bond issues collapsed in value. Certain very smart individuals thereupon proceeded to buy up the defunct bonds at a few cents on the dollar, until they obtained control of the properties against which the bonds had been issued. Some of the "older money" in real estate came about through this technique which, of course, was thoroughly legitimate according to the laws. The Salmon Building, 500 Fifth Avenue, at the northwest corner of 42nd Street, was acquired, for example, by means of this technique.

It took, however, that amazing manipulator of modern times, William Zeckendorf, to improve to its highest degree the procedure of squeezing money from buildings. This wizard decided in the early 1950s that the typical financial operations of real estate men were amateurish. They divided property into equity, the cash they put in, and that money contributed by the mortgagee. Mr. Zeckendorf reasoned that realty could be regarded much like other forms of modern corporate ownership, that is, merchandised in separate units comparable to common stock, preferred stock and debentures. Thus, he reasoned, an improved property is a unit consisting of many parts: it is land on which a building has been erected; the building itself; the operating value due from rent income; and the additional mortgage value of the rents isolated from the building. He was the first person properly to understand that the land could be sold to one party, the building to another, the operating lease to a third, and that even another mortgage position could be hewed from the rent income separate from the operating lease.

The first building to which he applied this technique was 2 Park Avenue. The structure had a value, according to traditional standards, of something less than $10 million. The primary step was to sell an operating lease on the entire property for $5 million, composed of $1.5 million cash and $3.5 million lease mortgage. This was reasonable because the building tossed off about $1 million which, even with the very heavy carrying charges of $600,000 on the new lease mortgage, meant that the investors received about $400,000 annually or an 8% return. Then Zeckendorf went to a mortgage company and borrowed $6,750,000 at 4½%. In a short time the rents went up, serving as additional security against the property, and Zeckendorf borrowed in the form of a second mortgage an additional $2,250,000. He thus received a total of $14 mil-

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lion for a property that was estimated as worth less than $10 million—and still held the fee, on which he turned down an additional offer of another million dollars!

In effect, what Zeckendorf did was to wring fifty per cent more money out of the building by dividing it into parts—fee, operating lease and separate fee mortgages. He perfected and even elaborated this technique in the subsequent purchases of the Graybar and Chrysler Buildings, as well as the Equitable Building at 120 Broadway. A peculiar refinement of the Chrysler-Graybar purchase was that the owning corporation he was going to acquire had several million dollars in its bank account. This money he needed for the purchase. Operating through a new corporation, he borrowed money from other sources to close the transaction and then immediately withdrew the money from the bank account he had now acquired to pay off his borrowing; in a sense he thus bought the building with the building's own money.

The labyrinthine mind of Mr. Zeckendorf is at present engaged in a project which will make even this earlier financing seem childish. Anxious to enlarge the facilities of his Drake Hotel, he is now closing the following proposition. As the first step, he will sell the Drake to a syndicate that will give him $41/2 million cash over a present $41/2 million mortgage. He will simultaneously lease back the hotel for a long term and also agree to use the money received to build the addition. The syndicate likewise will agree to lend him another $1 million so that he can proceed with construction, as well as permit him to increase the mortgage by an additional $2 million in order to assure him all the money required for the job. The return to the syndicate (it is reported in the trade) will be guaranteed at approximately 12%, with the rent being reduced in proportion to the reduction of the mortgage. At the end of ten years Mr. Zeckendorf will have a six months' option to buy back the entire enlarged property for $81/2 million over any mortgages then outstanding.

The terms of this type of financing stagger the imagination and are even difficult for experienced realty people to follow. The basis is a continuing market, one which will get better and better. But conservative men with many years of background shudder to think what will happen to buildings laden with top-heavy mortgages and demanding leases if ever there is a downward dip in our booming economy.

SYNDICATES—What has made this rickety structure of building and expanison possible is the syndicate.* The syndicate is merely a group of people who get together and form a partnership, participating in the profits according to their proportionate interest in the total deal. The attraction of the syndicate is its tax position. The corporation is subject to double taxation, first on normal income and then on dividends. But an individual or a partnership is subject only to one tax, the return received directly by the participant. Furthermore, the depreciation on

* The new Real Estate Investment Trust Act extends the syndicate method on an even vaster scope.

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the property, which is a tax-free item, goes to the corporation and not the stockholders when a property is held in corporate form, while it goes tax-free directly into the pockets of the individuals in a syndicate.

This simple equation has transformed New York real estate. Since properties are judged according to their return to the investors, the effect has been quite simply to double values. A building valued at $5 million to a corporation is now worth $10 million to a syndicate. Furthermore, since at each sale a new depreciation allowance is set up based on the new selling price, by raising prices the syndicates in practice add tax-free dollars to the income of their investors. A building formerly worth $5 million might be close to the end of its depreciation deduction. When bought for $10 million, the entire difference (minus land value, which is non-depreciable) is credited as additional depreciation. The syndicates then take this depreciation in one of the accelerated forms: presuming, in the above example, that $4 million is additional new depreciation at 4%, or $160,000 tax-free money, they take the 150% declining balance method (or 1½ times) and pull out $240,000 instead, all of which goes tax-free into the pockets of the participants.

Building after building, hotel after hotel, apartment after apartment, has fallen to the scythe of the syndicates. As buildings get older their depreciation runs out and the owners are forced to sell. When the syndicator offers almost double money for what the owner thought the property was worth, the urge to liquidate becomes irresistible. And the process feeds on itself. The syndicates have been offering between 10-12% annual profit, part of this tax-free, and the better they do the more money pours into their portfolios. The consequence is that values of New York real estate have soared so high, the market has been picked as clean of purchases as the dead carcass of a cow by ants. This is part of a vicious cycle, because builders feel compelled to erect new structures, knowing that even if they rent only with some degree of success, they can immediately sell at a profit. The whole swollen apparatus of leasehold building, accelerated depreciation, capital gains tax and syndicate operation forces a wild spiral of building and speculation which must load weight on weight until the realty market may collapse in a horrible shambles.

III

Real estate is subject to other tricks beside tax juggling. It is the perfect medium for the huckster mentality because the cheaper the product the higher the return. Cost of construction has risen to the point that a speculative formula has evolved to substitute tinsel for quality. The result has standardized building to the point that one can identify speculative structures merely at a glance.

It is so obvious that builders cover every inch of land with construction that when rare exceptions occur, like the Lever Building between 53rd and 54th Streets on Park Avenue, and the Seagram Building a block to the south, the news hits the front pages of the newspapers. The fact that crowding massive structures over narrow streets ruins the

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esthetic effect of architecture is of no importance, because the builders are concerned not with esthetics but with the rent received per square foot. This itself is legitimate in our economy, but when the ultimate desire is *only* the profit as divorced from architectural value and the municipal interest, we have gone a step in monetary perversion beyond all known previous civilizations. The so-called Babylonian or ziggurat effect is merely an extension of this maximum land use on the vertical level, whereby the builder conforms to the city code by the use of setbacks every three stories. A recent adaptation, the block base and tower, has become popular not because the builders underwent some weird conversion to artistic values, but rather because of the rising costs of roofing material and plumbing for the numerous setbacks.

A corollary of the 100% land usage and maximum setbacks is the application of glamor to the public parts of the structure. The typical speculator builds a fancy lobby, usually including an abstract mobile or ceramic design as a sop to "modern architecture"—Noguchi is the favorite for this today. The curtain wall façade is made of precast stainless steel cubes or hexagonals, cream plastic plates or aluminum members anodized in silver or gold. These skin treatments are "modern" too: and also cost less than the traditional brick and limestone. The fact that the thinly veneered façades leak like a sieve is irrelevant since the tenants will have already moved in on long-term leases by the time this is apparent. The elevators are the newest gimmick, playing soft semi-classical music with their operatorless controls that save the builder up to $.25 per square foot in labor cost.

The lobby, façade and elevators are the center of glamor application. Where the speculator recoups is in the mechanical equipment and, in particular, air conditioning. The difference between a good and bad air-conditioning installation runs as much as $3 per square foot in a modern office building and, since the average structure today is over 300,000 square feet, this item alone can save the builder almost $1 million. An adequate air-conditioning system should have zone controls for each face of the building and separate zone controls for the upper and lower parts. It should have air diffusers sufficient to handle each specific area, yet capable of throttling or "balancing." The system must have return ducts for the stale air, extended not only into the different zones but also into the areas subdivided by masonry or ceiling-high metal partitions. And, what is extremely important in the spring and autumn seasons, where there are wide oscillations of temperature in the same day, the installation should be equipped with what is called "100% fresh air," or oversized entry ducts, that permit the air to be completely replaced by new fresh air in a short period of time.

A defective air-conditioning system is eminently suited to the purposes of present-day builders because it is something the prospective tenant will not see. One cannot tell the difference between good and bad air flow merely by looking at plans. When more sophisticated tenants call in engineers to review the design of the air conditioning, the builder usually adapts or improves the system for the executive area, still ending

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up with a large saving on the unimproved clerical areas.

It might be added that the speculators themselves are not solely at fault, since many aspects of the elevator and air-conditioning industries are virtual monopolies. Costs have been pushed so high the builder reacts in natural fashion because of the competition. For a speculator to construct office space according to good standards, he would be forced to rent at a figure much higher than his competition. But again, the question of "fair return" is relevant since most builders feel that a job is losing money if they do not "get their money out" in six or seven years, which means a 14% or 17% profit before taking advantage of the accelerated depreciation deduction.

Allied with the continued cheapening of mechanical equipment is the new popular theory of large office areas. By a sort of hypnosis unrelated to reality, many tenants have been convinced that tremendous floors are more amenable to modern office layout. This hallucination is fostered by the Madison Avenue publicists who have been hired by almost all the top-notch speculative builders. Objective studies indicate that between 12,000 and 20,000 square feet is the ideal layout space for big firms. It is to the builder's interest, however, to convince tenants that huge floor areas are ideal because the larger the cube construction, the cheaper it is to build. The land acquisition is only a minor part of the total cost picture, yet due to the peculiarities of the city code, one can build proportionately more space the bigger the plot. Two stairways as fire exits and one fire tower air shaft are needed in a small building as well as a large. The bigger the floors, the less toilets per square foot are installed and the less sun load is confronted by air conditioning. Also, it is just as easy to build a large building as a small building, since the same number of trades are involved. The success of the campaign on the part of builders to convince tenants of the necessity to rent tremendous floors is one of the most striking phenomena of real estate today.

The speculator not only saves on tax techniques and cheap construction, but on renting and maintenance methods. The Real Estate Board of New York, a non-governmental association dominated by the larger realty interests, changed its method of computing square footage in 1953. Up to that date, tenants did not pay for corridors, toilets, air conditioning fan rooms located outside the premises, slop sink closets and electric and telephone rooms. Today, the tenant is required to pay for everything on a single-occupancy floor except the stairs, fire tower shaft and space occupied by the elevators. In effect, this means that the landlord receives between 7% and 12% more rent for the same space. Since few buildings are constructed on exact right angles and straight lines, the architect usually works hand in hand with the builder, giving him "the benefit of the doubt" on angles when the structure is not built flush with the lot line: for example, on a 8″ skew over 200 lineal feet, the landlord would pick up almost 70 square feet (averaging the skew is 4″ or one-third foot times 200 feet). Assuming two walls skewed in a thirty story building, the landlord would then pick up over 4,000 square

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feet! And we are starting on the assumption that the landlord indicates the correct footage to begin with. . . .

Another method by which landlords receive rent for useless square footage is by calculating as rentable area the enclosures of the peripheral air conditioning, a practice universally accepted. Most of these enclosures stick almost two feet into the premises. Assuming a building of 20,000 square feet on a floor or 200′ by 100′, there are 600 lineal feet of exterior walls. This means that the tenant pays for 1,200 square feet additional on each floor! It has been calculated by those in the know that the really shrewd operators, who combine all of these methods, receive a bonus amounting close to 20% over traditional measurements. Since the average equity runs less than one-third of the building cost, it is not hard to see why so much money pours into New York construction today.

But the tricks are not limited to space measurement. A standard item of modern leasing is the inclusion of the so-called "escalation clause" which provides that all increases in labor and maintenance costs, as well as taxes, are paid by tenants in proportion as their occupancy or rent is to the total occupancy or rent of the entire structure. Originally created to solve the problem of inflation on long-term leases, this clause has become a bonanza in the hands of ruthless landlords. The technique is simple. Certain common cost items are delayed during the first or base year and then applied later so that they fall into escalated items. The net effect is to increase the rent or landlord profit. For example, a very expensive matter in modern buildings is elevator maintenance. The large elevator companies charge about $2,500 per cab annually. What the speculator does is withhold awarding the contract for elevator maintenance during the first year the new building is open. Thereupon he hires the company and charges the entire amount to the tenant! In the case of a building containing 15 elevators and some 400,000 square feet, this contract would run about $37,500 annually. The landlord would thus pick up as extra rent a bonus of almost $.10 per square foot.

The escalation clause has been extended to include everything from uniforms and broken windows to toilet paper and soap. The side possibilities are almost too obvious to mention. The landlord needs soap, toilet paper, hand-tailored suits as well. And sometimes he has a dull-witted nephew who then appears as a new mechanic or central control inspector. . . .

One of the biggest extras in office maintenance is the cleaning contractor. In former times, owners built up their own crew of cleaning women, who worked on an average between 1600 and 1800 square feet an hour. Except for the few remaining owners of integrity—or fools, according to one's terms—this has long since been discarded. Today high pressure cleaning contractors employ crews of women who are forced to cover between 2200 and 2500 square feet an hour. The results are lamentable because it is impossible to clean properly at this speed. But who can catch the landlord in a lease violation? "Clean" is a general word, meaning something to one party and another to the next. When

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the tenant occupies the space on a 20-year lease, there is little he can do. But this is not all. The maintenance companies also specialize in "extras," floor waxing, venetian blind cleaning, polishing furniture and desks, replacing fluorescent tubes and ballasts. By arrangement, the owner of the building "participates" in these extras, creating a handy side income. If an occasional tenant protests the high prices, the landlord points out "there is nothing he can do" and furthermore shows the tenant that competitive prices are the same--which they are, since the various cleaning contractors have their own private agreements not to raid each other.

The tie-in between the cleaning contractors and the unions is an old story in this industry. Similar tie-ins exist between the large realty management companies and the superintendents. In one tragic case that recently occurred, an honest superintendent of a newly completed office building was fired by the management company because he tried to service the tenants according to decent standards. He went to the owner of the structure and was berated by him because he did not work for the benefit of the building! The poor honest man was ignorant of the fact that the owner received a "piece" of the money made by cutting standards and charging extras.

One of the newest ways to gouge tenants is known as "rent inclusion," referring to the including of electrical charges in the base rent. The practice was at first a reasonable reaction by realty owners to the elimination of electrical submetering in New York City. In essence, it meant that the owner, through the use of an independent consultant, would establish the cost of electricity and add it to the bill of the tenant. Since the tenant would have to pay the same retail rate to Consolidated Edison Company, it did not hurt him, whereas the owner received the advantage of the larger or wholesale rate.

Human rapacity being what it is, "inclusion" soon developed into a new racket. Although the average tenant uses between $.16 and $.20 worth of electricity per square foot, many owners charged a flat fee of $.25, pocketing the difference. When this malpractice was revealed, the owners then changed their tactics. Measurement of electricity is a difficult process since it involves many fluctuating factors such as line loss, demand charges, seasonal use variations, etc. The owners then made private deals with so-called "independent consultants" on a percentage basis, kicking back a portion of what they received in return for how high the consultant could push the charge. Since the alternative for the tenant was to run his own electrical lines all the way down the building in order to tie-in with the main service, he was at the mercy of unscrupulous landlords. This vicious practice often leads to a net additional rent of between $.05 and $.10 per square foot which, even after the booty is divided between the consultant and landlord, throws thousands of dollars extra income into the profit column.

REAL ESTATE management is singularly adapted to multiple corporations in common ownership. Since each corporation is only taxed

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30% up to the first $25,000 profit, every new building job is organized under a separate corporate entity in order to avoid the full 52% tax at the lowest step. Another common method of "thinning" taxes is by means of creating a management corporation distinct from ownership. Suppose a builder has completed a structure. He can operate the building directly, hire a management company or set up his own separate management. With the last method, he can then charge the ownership corporation a commission for operating the property and deliberately juggle the rent, salaries and benefits to fall into the most favorable tax position. This device is usually employed when the builder has relatives he must put on the payroll; in effect, it means that the government is paying their salaries for the most part.

Another popular aspect of real estate is its fat expense account allowance. The purchase, sale, rent and general investigation of property is a category so large in its implications that almost any and every expense is legitimate. If one wants to check realty in southern California during the cold part of the winter, and the approach is carefully documented with letters to brokers, etc., this is a legitimate tax deduction. If a syndicate considers buying a property in Venezuela, a trip to that country is only in the line of business, with all sundry expenses allowed. When a potential tenant wants to see the latest show on Broadway or stay overnight at the best hotel or be provided with the consolations of a call girl, these are all reasonable accommodations to the problem of realty advancement. It is only part and parcel of business that expensive Christmas presents must be sent to one's clientele; and some of these presents, like homing pigeons, have a remarkable talent for returning home. Twenty-three-foot Cadillacs with television and telephones, including ship-to-shore yacht connections, are owned by certain well-known titans of realty. How can they do business without being able to contact their colleagues at a moment's notice?

One amusing aspect of the expense account is the expansion of New York realty interests in Florida. This has an obvious background. Suppose an apartment builder in Manhattan wants to spend his vacation at Miami Beach, Boca Raton or the Keys. If he builds or buys a hotel or apartment house in the city of his choice, it is inhuman of the government to expect him to have all the rooms fully rented for the entire season. The fact that one large hotel or apartment suite stays vacant merely reflects the vagaries of renting. Then again, this same owner must see that his business is going on satisfactorily. It is only logical that he fly down several times during the winter in order to check his affairs. And the transport, meeting with clients at night clubs, restaurant bills, etc., are fairly regarded as legitimate business expenses. . . .

A last aspect of holding real estate bears notice. If an individual invests in the stock market, he must pay a normal tax on dividends. The Internal Revenue Department has decided, however, that after a realty corporation has paid a tax on regular business profits, it is entitled to a tax credit of 85% on additional profits if this money is invested elsewhere. The remaining 15% is then taxed at the regular 52% rate, which

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means in effect that if a realty corporation goes into the stock market with its undistributed profits, it pays a total tax of less than 8% (that is, 52% of 15%) on what it then makes. Since a like investment of this money in realty over again would be taxed the full 52%, the result is that dividends from the stock market are only hit by the Internal Revenue Department at one-sixth the same rate, or less than 8% instead of 52%!

Let us take an example. Suppose a realty outfit has made $100,000 after taxes. If it takes this money and reinvests it in another proposition, the profit is again subject to full tax at the 52% rate. On the other hand, if the corporation invests the money in the stock market and collects dividends at 5%, or $5,000 on the $100,000, it then pays approximately 8% of this $5,000 as taxes, leaving it over $4,500 after taxes. At the same time the money is fully liquid, since the stocks can be sold within twenty-four hours. In a market like that of the last years, where stock values have shot up, this is particularly significant because a sale then would only be subject to capital gains or a total of 25% tax on the rise in value of the stocks. Instead of being "frozen in" with their money, as the trade terms corporate realty holdings, investment can be made at minimum taxes both on dividend income and sale profits.

IV

In trying to analyze the social consequences of the favorable treatment afforded to building, the first thought to strike even the most superficial observer is the resulting architectural mediocrity. In truth, speculative builders with a high sense of product can rarely survive, as the history of Fred F. French at Tudor City well documents. Speculators, obsessed by the gold lodestar, tend to "mortgage out" or reduce the money stuck in a job to the minimum, and then add structure on structure in a dizzy pyramid until the slightest breeze of vacancy may blow it over. This leads to a frantic chase for the cheapest methods, which is evidenced by the mechanical repetition of building patterns. The Uris Bros. have a style: colored bakelite disks behind aluminum fins. The Tishmans have a style: microscopic enlargement of a fly's eye, pasted on concrete blocks. Erwin Wolfson has a style: loft construction of the 1920s, built ten times larger. And New York City might be renamed Rothville for the architectural firm of Emery Roth & Sons, whose monotonous variations on Speculator Style have dotted Third Avenue and Park Avenue with squat boxes. The difference between Levittown and Rothville is only size.

Several of the new buildings, created as home offices for billion-dollar concerns, escape this general pall. The main problem even for these worthy structures is their setting. Leonardo da Vinci observed centuries ago that a building should rise in height only one-half the distance of the free span of space before it, but Municipal Code is based on the exact reverse. For a short time New Yorkers can look from the east side of Sixth Avenue and 52nd Street across a vacant plot, recently purchased by Uris Bros., toward a group formed by the RCA building, the

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Time-Life Building and the Equitable Life Building. When the Uris Bros.—the largest single builders of office space in the city today—add another of their hulking masses to this vacant lot, the mighty tableau will be drowned in the total effect.*

But the practical results of the present boom provoke more than merely esthetic objections. New York City is strangling itself. By mass transit 40,000 persons can be transported on the same amount of roadway that will only carry 1600 persons in private cars: or 25 times as many. But buses and the railroads, which the municipal and state governments refuse to subsidize for the public good, have become so expensive, that cars—on an average carrying less than two persons apiece—are used more and more. And the focal points of traffic are two small Manhattan zones: from Bowling Green on Broadway to Fulton Street in the downtown area, and the Park-Sixth Avenue complex in midtown. Since the prime rule of building is location first, last and always, the concentration becomes worse with each passing year. Permitting the construction of Pan Am Building—due north of Grand Central Station—which will dump 25,000 additional persons in the heart of midtown, is an act of municipal madness.

THE RISING COST of land has led to a type of economic ghettoization which is the antithesis of democracy. The rich and poor used to live close together, but this is much less true today. Public housing brings the lucky poor together, and high rents keep the unlucky poor segregated in ugly slums. The Protestant whites have left New York City and the Jews are following. By rule of the inverse ghetto, the East Side is becoming the haven for the last-remaining rich. A broker three years ago offered the author a large vacant plot on the East Side at $70 a foot. The price seemed ridiculous but the broker said: "Take it. The East Side is the only place where white people want to live today. The values must go up." Recently the same plot was sold, after two additional turnovers, at over $100 a foot. If the present movement continues, New York City will soon resemble a grotesquely enlarged medieval town, with each caste in its own quarter.

Commenting on this metropolitan concentration over two decades ago, the well-known social critic Lewis Mumford referred to the new Trinity of finance, insurance and advertising. Certainly, the Rome of this Trinity is New York City and its leading churches the home offices of these industries. The insensate march of Manhattan realty values reflects the disease of modern times, for in this city is collected all the bureaucratic and non-productive functions of the American economy. The great hive of advertising, design, speculation, publicity, news, television, periodical literature and insurance buzzes with frantic energy of which the building boom is merely the outer form: buzzing for wild profits and quick turnover, not the production of capital goods or values adding grace to human existence.

As long as predatory cunning and acquisitive lust are the highest

* Since the Rockefellers have become partners in this project, the Uris architectural style has been vastly upgraded.

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social virtues, this state of affairs will continue. The public really admires its dream fulfillment in megalomania; in one sense, the conniver is the embodiment of American Success. A recent survey of the National Bureau of Economic Research showed that since 1949—which not so coincidentally was the birth of the realty boom—there has been a trend toward more wealth in the hands of fewer people and that already by 1953 only 1.6 per cent of the country's population held 30 per cent of the nation's personal wealth. Again not coincidentally, the survey indicated that New Yorkers lead the nation in total personal incomes. The report did not indicate that more children die of rat bites in the slums of the metropolitan area than elsewhere. People seem less fascinated by such statistics.

Without doubt, real estate—and its sister, the stock market—are the two provinces where money can be made most quickly in our society. Accelerated depreciation, capital gains, the single tax on syndicate ownership: the entire structure, emphasizing cheap building and rapid sale, is a mechanical milker that pumps out a continual stream of cream from the public cow. As long as the laws deliberately subsidize the rich and rapacious, a frenzy of building and speculation will be a permanent aspect of American life, a frenzy which has robbed America of internal equilibrium and a sane view of the changing world.

THESE DISTORTIONS can be resolved simply. Depreciation, like amortization of mortgages, should be *after* taxes, and not represent a tax-free return. This is the method prevailing in many European countries. Home owners even in this country do not get allowances for depreciation and there is no reason why business should be given advantages denied to the home owner.

Syndicates are permitted a single tax denied to corporations on the peculiar basis that no tax ruling has specifically called them to account. Such tax discrimination is neither logical nor does it serve a useful social function; to the contrary, it favors one class of investors against another and is thoroughly "un-American" in the most abused sense of the word. And, most important of all, capital gains should be eliminated; this specious tax dodge resting on the fiction that capital held over six months is a long-term investment as distinguished from capital invested for less than six months, and hence subject to a maximum 25% tax on profits. To this one gimmick alone can be attributed the violent cycles and distortions of the American economy.

But the individuals who take advantage of these legal devices are also the individuals who make the laws; it is their representatives who control the legislatures and sit on the courts. And each obscure voter, who votes for them, dreams of participating in the great rat race of amassing income as a symbol rather than for use. As far as the objective observer can see, only when the whole inflated structure collapses of its own weight—as it must—will reforms such as those touched on above be effected. And then it may be too late, since we shall all, the innocent as well as the guilty, be buried in the falling debris. . . .

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NOTES ON NEW YORK HOUSING

Ernest van den Haag

The absence of esthetic gratification—an outstanding characteristic of the architecture of our cities—has definite effects on the community as well as on individuals. The main effects become apparent through a multitude of symptoms, ambiguous enough to be seldom traced and related to their origin: without esthetic gratification man's capacity to give meaning to his life atrophies. The untranscended life is not worth living, though it sputters on amorphously. The feeling of valuelessness, of futility—which oozes from our suburbs as much as it does from the city itself—is at the root of the *tedium vitae*, the listless and the restless boredom, the quiet or unquiet desperation which generates so many of our amusements, crimes and neuroses.

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American slums never offered much esthetic gratification. Unlike many European slums, they are not, after all, neglected places through which the splendor of the past still shines. There is no splendor, no past. They were built as slums, as tenements, or, as ramshackle houses once sheltering the middle class. Buildings are monotonous rather than varied and picturesque. No one every bothered to adorn the streets on which they were built with monuments or fountains, or even trees. Nonetheless our slums at one time were neighborhoods which generated or permitted communal feelings, if we are to believe the memories of many writers who were brought up in them. There were perhaps two major reasons for this. First, the inhabitants of each slum were ethnically homogeneous, in the main, and often the tenants of entire blocks came from the same village or region. They shared the same culture, the same past. And they were bound together by their common situation with respect to outside society. Today the slum is no longer homogeneous. (Puerto Rican slums are perhaps an exception; and the Negro slums are ethnically homogeneous, but not otherwise.) The population is recruited from the poor, the old, and the marginal of a great variety of ethnic and cultural groups. They have in common nothing but poverty.

Secondly, the pervasiveness of modern means of transportation and communication impairs the existence of separate cultural communities within the city. Thus the slumdwellers could hardly maintain a shared culture if they had one. The slumdwellers are on the outside; but they each look toward American society at large, not toward an autonomous

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slum community. They have nothing of their own. Thus, only the disadvantages of the slums have remained, the badly built, badly maintained, crowded, ugly and dirty houses.

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THESE DISADVANTAGES are real enough, as is the poverty of those who suffer them. It is quite unnecessary, as well as wrong, to attribute additional problems—such as high crime rates—to these deplorable conditions. For slum housing, at most, plays a very minor role in crime which is more directly associated—to the extent to which it is associated with social conditions at all—with poverty and with difficulties of acculturation. The housing conditions themselves are the effect, not the cause of these factors, which are also associated with delinquency. Thus, better housing, though worthwhile *per se*, is most unlikely to reduce crime rates. Delinquency, though located in the slums, is causally connected with dwelling conditions no more than the piety of hermits, or monks, was connected with their dwelling places.

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HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS instead of replacing slums have more often displaced them, i.e., shifted their location. More important, they are no less sterile esthetically than the slums were. And bureaucratic direction has been substituted for community. In some ways the sterility is more awesome because it seems so orderly, seamless, and, therefore, ineluctable. Both the physical and social structure of housing developments is designed to prevent spontaneity and variety; they succeed altogether in blocking the communal feeling and the liveliness that was the one redeeming feature at least of some slums. (The planned "ethnic mixture" of some housing developments combined with rigidly maintained social monotony seems like an unintended self-parody.) The refusal of the housing authorities to allow social variety makes the already institutional air even harder to breathe. Thus developments are for "low" or "middle" incomes—not for both. (And the buildings are so built as to attract only low income groups.) Yet it would be simple to have high and low rent apartments in the same development if not in the same house. It would be simple, too, to stimulate small business enterprises—but the housing authority does its best to suppress them. In general, it is a well meaning but utterly tyrannical and interfering landlord, a landlord who reserves the right to enter tenants' apartments at any time, and, in effect, regards, however unsuccessfully, the tenants as wards.

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BUT THE TROUBLE with housing developments is not so much that they make things worse. The main trouble is that they do not make things better. Thus what might have been a temporary problem becomes a permanent one by dint of great effort and expenditure. The unmet problem is perpetuated all around us. The architecture of the City of New

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York not only fails to offer the esthetic gratification that inheres in good urban design and building and meet the visitor unsought, it also misses or spoils numberless natural opportunities. Of course, esthetic gratifications are not likely to be obtained by an effort of the will; nor can they be manufactured. They must grow. The best we can do at present is to prepare the soil; but actually we are strewing it with rubble, and cementing it over. Let me illustrate.

The many renewal projects—apart from the advantages and disadvantages mentioned—at best relocate slums. What we need now is not so much the replacement of old by new structures, but simply more dwelling space, i.e., additional structures and restoration and maintenance of old ones. In this respect, far too little is done. The authorities are more interested in tearing down old, and building new houses than in restoring and adding, despite speeches to the contrary. It is costly; some people get rich; bureaucrats thrive. The inhabitants do not benefit.

It would be simpler and better to subsidize, if subsidize we must, not developments or renewal projects but tenants. They should be given the amount needed to rent suitable dwelling space on the market, instead of being subsidized in kind by being offered the dwelling space that the authorities consider suitable. Of course, the subsidized may use the monetary subsidy for other purposes. They may be right; these purposes may be more important to them. They should be free to decide. It seems most illiberal to tender a subsidy to people in need, on condition that it be used for housing. There is no evidence to show that housing is always the most important factor in improving a family's life style. And it is this improvement not improvement in "housing" *per se* that would redound to the benefit of the city at large.

One might also subsidize individual builders—as is done to some extent—by tax concessions and, by helping them to borrow on the market at low rates. Apart from these two kinds of subsidy (and from better building and zoning provisions) it would be best if the government were to stay out of housing except for providing parks. On balance government built or sponsored housing has, at great cost, not improved matters. Subsidies to tenants might be better and could hardly be worse.

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These problems are hard to solve politically; but at least they are easy to decide morally. Others are far more tangled. Though by now many of the original inhabitants of New York tend to move to the suburbs as soon as they have families and can afford to, the city remains attractive to our least privileged citizens, Southern Negroes and Puerto Ricans. They come because they can expect to make a better living than at home—however bad it be. Yet, they cannot earn the income required to house them according to the standards we regard as minimal in New York. This places New Yorkers in a curious position: either they house at their own expense every poverty stricken American who wishes to move from elsewhere—which will not decrease the desire to do so—or they tolerate housing they have decided to find intolerable; or, finally,

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they ask the Federal government to finance housing for immigrants. This last seems a little, but not much, more equitable than to burden the New York taxpayer: why should a Missouri farmer be asked to house a Puerto Rican as soon as the latter decides to move to New York? Politically it is the easiest thing. And why not subsidize city dwelling as farming is subsidized? Why, on the other hand, do either?

If we do not want to use the miserable dormitories that "solve" the problem in Russia and China, the only thing that can be done is to plainly inform prospective immigrants of the unsatisfactory conditions they will find in New York. If they prefer these to their present ones, we have no right to balk them anymore than we can compel people to cease smoking because of lung cancer. But we also have no responsibility to provide them housing they were warned would not be available. In essence, this is what we are doing now despite the pious talk. But we might drop the pious talk and clarify the problem.

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The housing problem cannot be solved in a general way by a few sweeping measures. It involves numerous remedies each of limited effect, and cumulatively perhaps not sufficient, but certainly necessary.

At present, building, and therefore housing, is too expensive largely because of a combination of government policies which the government then attempts to counteract by subsidies. Antiquated building codes require expensive and unnecessary features and procedures, and prevent the use of new materials and techniques. They also foster corruption: the codes are so impractical that officials must be bribed to interpret them so as to make building practical. (It is remarkable how much more ready everybody seems to be to clamor for additional subsidies than to do anything at all to reduce costs, or to investigate how they are to be spent.) Unions are permitted to, and protected in, barring less costly techniques and the entrance of additional labor into the building trades; and in limiting the productivity of existing labor; and in raising wage rates to such a point that the government, by subsidizing housing, in effect pays a major share of the wages; this means that money from taxpayers, or tenants, who are often less well off is channeled into the pocket of workers better off than most of those who subsidize them. No city should get any Federal help in housing unless its building codes are rationalized.

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FAR TOO LITTLE attention is paid—partly because of high labor costs, partly because of neophilia—to restoring neglected buildings. Our tax system places a premium on neglect of houses. This could be changed. It is true that landlords are criminally liable for certain types of neglect, but this has not served as an effective remedy and would not serve, I think, even if the inspecting agencies were less corrupt than they are. (They could not be more corrupt.) We need laws authorizing the city to make needed repairs, and provide services, such as heating, even to

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take over the management of the property if the landlord, duly warned, fails to act, or is unavailable. Of course, all costs should be assessed against such landlords and rent payments or titles held as security. On the other hand, city ordinances against overcrowding apartments are of no use: no tenant crowds an apartment if he can help it and unenforceable laws merely abet corruption. (The building of overly cramped dwelling spaces can be prohibited; I am referring to over-occupancy of already built ones—due to shortage of dwelling space, and not, as the law seems to imply, the perversity of tenants.)

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WE HAVE TO DEFINE the desirable and then think of ways of making it desired. We should have laws to prevent the further "functional" division of the city into business and residential districts. For this division makes both boring. A street is interesting if it has variety and pedestrian traffic. And our municipal planners have done their best to eliminate it. Variety might be preserved or created by making it illegal to devote more than a portion of any block or area to residential *or* to business purposes—at least in those parts of the town that can still be saved from the utter boredom of "functional" division. So far zoning has often made matters worse in this respect.

There is no reason why landlords should not be obligated to plant trees before their houses, or automobile owners and manufacturers to control the poisonous fumes from cars which, together with many other things are known to increase the lung cancer rate in cities over that of the countryside—quite apart from the unpleasantness. So far operative planning seems to be in the hands of cement and gasoline fanatics who want neatness, even if it be monotony, and traffic, even if it kills them. They fear quiet, spontaneity, walking and anything that does not involve the sale of something.

I am not under the illusion that the achievement of all that has been proposed would solve the problems of the city. But it would be a beginning. It would not create but it would permit esthetic gratification or at least an environment in which it can be imagined. Even as it is, I like living in New York better than living anywhere else in the United States. But this is not because, it is despite the efforts of our municipal authorities. How great a place it would be if we could get not just a city government that was honest at the top, as LaGuardia was, but also imaginative . . .

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PUBLIC HOUSING: TENANTS AND TROUBLES

Mike Miller and Carl Werthman

By June 30, 1960, the New York City Housing Authority had become the country's largest landlord, housing some 567,000 lower-class tenants in 109 projects. Anyone who has visited some of these projects, however, knows that the problem of slums in New York City has not yet been overcome. Even though the new apartment units are freshly painted and spacious, often with enviable views of the city, the curses of children are still etched into the sidewalks surrounding each building, a leitmotif which continues up the asphalt walkways, into elevators, on corridor walls, ending in front of each apartment door. One middle-aged Jewish tenant put the paradox, "Urination in elevators, light bulbs taken out, dirty remarks on the stairs. But let me ask you? Compared to the Puerto Ricans and Negroes, did we ever get such good places to live when we first came to New York?"

I

As it becomes increasingly clear that public housing has failed to make its tenants middle class, a host of critics have appeared who seem almost to defend the slum. The problem, they claim is the dislocation of tenants from the social structures and cultures in which they felt at home, cultures which did more to enrich city life than to destroy it.

The human map of the slum has traditionally been a patchwork of ethnic territorial claims, each informal island held together by bonds of family, friendship and culture. These territories even produce their own "militias," the ethnic gangs, whose function it is to fight for or defend a share of New York real estate. By eating away the traditional battlefield, public housing plots partially destroy this hundred-year-old pattern. Instead of living in island villages transplanted on city blocks, Puerto Rican families find themselves randomly shuffled among Negroes, Italians, and Jews, all of whom share a dislike for Puerto Ricans. Having left an ethnic community with its churches, storekeepers, men's clubs, teenage cliques, and well-established networks of female gossip, the ethnic tenant finds himself in what is defined by the gang world as "neutral territory," an integrated housing project. Without the social support that the ethnic neighborhood and its institutions provide, it is increasingly difficult for the individual tenant to face the work-a-day world.

This critique of public housing, however, misses essential aspects of the problem. First, public housing projects are not devoid of ethnic social structures. Anyone who is skeptical about this need only spend some

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time sitting on the benches in front of project buildings. On one side of the asphalt play area is the Puerto Rican bench where women gossip in Spanish about the Negroes, the Whites, and the Management. Facing them is the white bench and on a third side sit the Negroes. The careful observer will notice that the ethnic lines are rarely crossed in this small world of bench culture. Each of the ethnic groups has a social structure and a life of its own, just as each of them has a different conception of the management. Responses to managerial rule are conditioned by shared cultural experience.

In Puerto Rico, the transition from Spanish colonial rule to American welfare statism was accomplished with no revolt against traditional forms of political authority. The generation of Puerto Ricans that has found its way to this country is accustomed to regarding the state as the source of aid and sustenance. It is not unusual for the Governor of Puerto Rico to receive hundreds of personally addressed letters each week from villagers all over the island asking for anything from pencils and shoes to new jobs. The current government has responded, with the help of federal money and the return of the excise tax on rum, by launching an enormous program of welfare reconstruction called "Operation Bootstrap." High on the list of priorities is public housing which, as any visitor to San Juan can see, is fast becoming typical for the urban Puerto Rican. Many of the islanders who now live in New York are no strangers to housing projects.

Yet public housing in Puerto Rico is different from its New York equivalent, particularly in the way it is managed. A worker in the commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Urban Renewal and Housing Administration in Rio Piedras put the difference this way: "Our public housing manager is far less prone to be assertive, nosy, paternalistic. In part this is because the management corps is just a small notch educationally and economically above the tenants; and in part it is because there is a tradition here of letting people and families alone personally—no going into apartments, individual fines, or treating the tenants like dirt." In short, project managers in Puerto Rico are less "professionalized" than their continental counterparts and depend, in large measure, on help from the tenants in keeping the projects neat and clean. There are no large staffs to keep up the projects, and everyone, including the children, is expected to help maintain the cooperatives.

THERE IS A FURTHER and perhaps more important difference in the conception of the state and its public housing. Puerto Rico has no tradition of protestant capitalism with its corresponding ambivalence about the morality and dignity of accepting public aid. The Puerto Rican has grown up with the philosophy of social welfare; this results in an initial and instinctive trust of public management wherever it may be found. A Puerto Rican who moves into a housing project in New York expects the manager to be his friend. If he is not a native urbanite but has come to this country straight from a village, the public housing manager becomes in expectation a substitute for the local mayor—a man who

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can help out with a job and whose good word can forestall an eviction.

Instead of being taken care of by a friendly manager, however, the Puerto Rican immigrant seeking, for example, a rental postponement is referred first to one specialized staff person and then perhaps to another. This referral may well be the beginning of a journey through the labyrinth of welfare agencies in New York—a journey which more often than not gets him nowhere. Then the Puerto Rican wakes one morning to find a "three-day notice" pinned to his door. In the coldest of legal jargon he is informed that he will be served a "Dispossess Notice" if he does not pay his rent in three days. "Why couldn't the manager come to my door and ask me what the problem was," said a shy Puerto Rican wife in the project. "I am not going to cheat him the money." This is the beginning of fear. Afterwards talk is often about the omniscient and naked power holders in the management office.

The New York Negro knows his way around. When he cannot pay his rent, the last place to which he goes is the management office. He just lets the Dispossess Notices pile up on the kitchen table while going about the task of finding or borrowing the money. He knows that "all this legal stuff is so much jazz" and that evictions are rare. He knows how to fight: with angry letters to the central housing office, the Mayor, and his State Assemblyman, or a visit to the local Democratic Club. The Negro's style is thus a pattern of evasion and judicious attack. He knows how to put the manager off on the rent and disguise the fact that his sister has come to live with him for a month or two. He rarely complains about the manager; he mentions him only with contempt, a contempt he demonstrates as often as he can by evading the project rules successfully.

For the Jewish and Italian tenants, older veterans of ethnic warfare, the manager is an ally in the fight for middle-class respectability. As many commentators on Jewish culture have pointed out, even in the worst days of the Jewish Lower East Side, the Jews were never really lower class. To the current Jewish tenant of public housing, the management is defined as the last legal outpost against filth and noise, the Puerto Rican and the Negro. "The manager has to be tough," said an elderly bearded Jew, "or else they'll run the place over. I'm not prejudiced, but these people just don't know how to keep a place clean." The remaining Orthodox Jews and resident Italians do not like the invasion into their old neighborhood, the Lower East Side. They realize they are powerless to stop it but would like certain of its excesses curtailed. They are aware that many of the rules fall equally hard on them but appear willing to pay the price. "It's not the way we'd like to live," said a father of three, "but if there weren't the rules there'd be a jungle."

II

The initial difference between the old slums and the new is the pressure of the Housing Authority, with offices on the project premises. The Housing Authority codifies the body of middle-class norms and values by making the project rules. Regardless of how idealistic a particular housing manager may be, the tone of a tenant's life is set by his

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reaction to these rules—rules which tenants obey upon threat of fine or eviction and which managers necessarily enforce.

A tenant must report any increase in salary so that the Housing Authority may raise his rent correspondingly or, at a certain maximum point, evict him. He may not paint his apartment; he may not have guests stay for any longer than three months; he may not walk on the project grass or ride bicycles on the project walks. He may not have pets, install air conditioners, or shake a mop out the window. (This last is to protect the "beauty" of the buildings.) While some of these rules are listed in the *Tenants' Handbook,* others are the property, as it were, of the landlord, unavailable in printed form to the tenant. These public and private rules contain a final insult: the manager and his personnel may enter apartments at will. The Housing Inspector, "to catch a guest," may suddenly appear in the apartment. Sometimes the irate tenants tell "the authority" to get out, but they do so in fear.

The important thing about these regulations is that they make explicit what is ordinarily implicit in routine middle-class life. There is presumably no need to tell a middle-class housewife not to shake her mop out the window or to "keep radios or television sets turned low after 10 P.M. on Saturdays and Sundays." Middle-class behavior is not something you can teach a Puerto Rican by imposing fines; fear of eviction does not take the place of socialization. Moreover, many of the American Negroes, ambitious and sensitive, deeply resent being dealt with as lower-class stereotypes. And those tenants who do not notice the middle-class assumptions of the rules, also do not understand them.

III

Members of different ethnic groups have their own reactions to the project and tend to stick together. There is, however, another style of life which is perhaps the unique product of public housing. We will call this new style "community activism." It is defined by two characteristics: first a definition of the Housing Authority and its managers as "public servants," bureaucrats whose job it is to attend to the needs of the "public," that is, the tenants; secondly, a deliberately interracial organization.

The definition of a manager as public servant is a reaction to the manager's own view of "his" tenants as people in need of public assistance. The activists are extremely sensitive to the usual definition of a project as a place for the poor. Many of them are upwardly mobile and have had the benefits of education but find themselves trapped by economic circumstance. The prestige of being an official in an organization and the chance to associate with others holding similar values and aspirations bring them together into the Tenant Association.

Once organized, these tenants challenge "the prerogatives of management" by forming a Grievance Committee apparatus, presenting the claims of tenants who feel they have been treated arbitrarily. Members of the new organization soon learn to go over the manager's head to the commissioners of the Housing Authority in order to get what they want

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in the local project. The successful Tenant Association thus creates a significant shift in power. This is not to say that a genuine "pluralistic" setting develops, one in which real power is shared. Since the manager is not responsible in any way to the tenants, such pluralism is impossible. What is accomplished is a new sense of dignity for those in the project who undertake the struggle.

Out of common experience with the management and common efforts to change certain aspects of project life, a new interracial unity grows. As the tenants become involved in the struggle to play a role in project administration, they self-consciously turn their back on the styles of ethnic parochialism they see around them. They recognize its divisive consequences and begin to recruit members into the Association. "We've got to be together if we are going to get any place," commented the president of a Tenant Association. Although interracial unity develops primarily through conflicts over family grievances and repair problems, self-help activities such as blood banks, day nurseries, and safety committees which work to improve lighting, street signs, and paving also play a part. When tenants who stay close to their own ethnic groups begin to see the results of meaningful integration, they first support and then join the movement. Gradually, a genuine interracial community begins to take the place of a racial organization based on prejudice.

IV

The tenant revolt and the formation of an association lead to counterattack on the part of the Authority. Managers hostile to tenant associations refuse them the right to post material on building walls, interfere with meetings and, in some cases, help set up rival groups. Tenant-oriented managers are often willing to work with the new associations, but even the best of them cannot officially share power and authority with the tenants. And informal consultation often makes the Tenant Association an "arm" of management instead of giving the people who live in the project a voice in the control and organization of their daily lives. How a manager enforces rules will determine whether he is thought of as a despot or a benevolent king. In either case he is the sole ruler; he must carry out certain rules which go against the grain of what activists want in their project. Good and bad managers alike must enforce the regulations on occupancy, painting, and rent.

An examination of the arguments used on both sides of the battle suggests the ideological confusion that exists among the administrators of the welfare state. At the same time that the New York Public Housing Authority fights to obtain community centers, extra police protection, new services, a social work staff, and store space in the projects, it has refused to let tenants fight independently for similar facilities.

In a "Bulletin to Managers," the New York Housing Authority Commissioners state that:

> encouragement and cooperation will be given organizations composed of residents of our projects, provided such organizations are formed for the

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purpose of promoting the welfare of the tenant body and the maximum enjoyment of the project by the residents.

This same document, however, contains a revealing clause:

> The Authority does reserve the right to withhold recognition from any organization which, in its judgment, is of a *partisan* or *controversial* (emphasis ours) nature or which engages in discriminatory practices.

A Tenant Association newspaper in one of the projects on New York's Lower East Side aptly stated the Authority's dilemma. The article looked like this:

U. S. CONSTITUTION VS. N. Y. CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY

First Amendment, U. S. Constitution:

"Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition to Government for a redress of grievances."

Mr. R—(the project manager) said you exist by the wish of the Housing Authority; you are not completely independent. The Authority allows your Association to exist and can end tenant organizations whenever it wishes. The Authority ended tenant organizations a few years ago, and it can do so now if it wishes.

WE ARE PUZZLED—WHICH SHOULD WE GO BY?

The manager at whom this comment was directed was not puzzled. In a meeting with top-level Housing Authority personnel he claimed that:

> The Tenants' Association is now in a power struggle with management. The Chairman of this Association told me that the Tenants' Association was independent of management. I told them we could terminate their organization if the Housing Authority desired to do so.

Higher personnel in the Housing Authority, disturbed by the conflict existing in the project, told the manager to act so as to "facilitate communication between management and tenants." Among management groups in both industry and welfare, this has been the most common solution to problems posed by conflict. It has even been given scientific status by certain sociologists engaged in the study of organizations. Legitimate conflicts of interest simply do not exist. Upon close inspection, the only things that are ever found are problems of "communication" which hinder "mutual understanding."

THE CONFUSION of the Public Housing Authority over the extent of tenant's rights—some of which are constitutionally guaranteed—as well as its systematic refusal to admit that genuine conflicts of interest exist, reflects the general ideological dilemma facing American administrative liberalism today. In the course of the national struggle between welfare statism and free enterprise, the officials of the welfare state have been forced to make major concessions. In the pure form of the welfare

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state, individuals who, through no fault of their own, find themselves unable to reap the rewards of a productive economy are allowed to live under semi-socialistic principles. "To each according to his need, from each according to his work" is precisely the principle on which low-income public housing is based. Tenants who earn less than some fixed figure pay rent which is proportional to their income.

In deference to the view that the best men are those who can afford to pay their own way, however, the Public Housing Authority has slipped in the half-hidden assumption that tenants should be penalized for receiving state support. This view is reflected in the income ceiling imposed on occupants, a built-in assurance that projects will remain lower-class and that mobile leadership will disappear. The battle over the Tenant Association indicates that a further penalty may be the forfeiture of certain constitutional rights. The project thus becomes a sort of purgatory for the temporary casualties of the economic struggle, and the idea of the welfare state takes a clear second place to the American conception of freedom as successful competition.

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THE WEST VILLAGE: LET THERE BE BLIGHT

Stephen Zoll

The Housing and Redevelopment Board has replaced Robert Moses's Slum Clearance Committee, and a new order has been proclaimed for the on-going work of tucking in New York's residential shirt tails. Robert Moses, who now deals only with sovereign nations, has been declared the villain of Title I, and his successors, previously his assistants, have announced themselves the heroes of Urban Renewal.

A solution to the housing emergency in New York has two complicated parts that must first be separated in order to describe the problem itself: first, how to go about it, and second, what to end up with. This article is meant to describe how neither part has been fundamentally changed from the original destructive program, whatever the good intentions that have been declared.

With slogans that everyone can understand, James A. Felt, the City Planning Commissioner, promises an end to bulldozing first and questions later. But bulldozing is not a method, it is an inevitable result of bad planning. Nor did Moses's crimes begin and end with bulldozing. His way of getting things done involved manipulations of the City Charter, the Municipal Code, and federal and state regulations; his objective was arrogantly monumental architecture, and his method was expressed in contempt for obstacles—he had help. The chief obstacles were the people and their laws; but in a curious way the opaque waters of the law offered Moses protection: no one, apparently, understood the law as well as he did.

Briefly, the procedure by which eligibility for federally assisted renewal is established involves first the City's Master Plan and Map. A public hearing and Board of Estimate approval must precede any map change whereby an area is officially listed as blighted. Once on the map, an area may be designated for renewal only after a second hearing, required by state law. Only then may the City Planning Commission direct the Housing and Redevelopment Board to request permission of the Board of Estimate to ask for federal study funds with which to decide how to renew.

The actual plans for renewal are subject to further public hearings. This may seem like a cumbersome procedure; certainly it did to Moses. But the lifetime of residential construction is long, the space it occupies valuable, and its effect within the fabric of the city profound. Moses was able to condense nearly all these operations into one session, and make the map change retroactive. Opposition never had a chance. Neighborhoods disappeared not so much by bulldozer as by fiat.

So the days of Moses are past. Yet the waters which he parted to lead his children out of bondage remain con-

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gealed from the very force of his passage, and the willing riff-raff of smaller prophets skip along dry-shod in his wake.

I

There is an area west of Greenwich Village, some 14 small blocks which border the Hudson River, whose residents learned in the *New York Times* of February 21, 1961, that their homes had been declared blighted, which is to say substandard and insanitary, and that two days later, on on the 23rd, the Board of Estimate would be petitioned to allow a request for $350,000 of federal planning funds.

Let me characterize the neighborhood. The streets here are dotted with an amazing display of urban diversity and lively activities. There are quick-lunch counters, two truckers' hotels, garages, a sailor's slop chest store, warehouses and a post office in an imposing federal building. There is a fair density of bars, workmen's by day and social by night, a beautiful Flemish brick three-story home which was once a farmstead when this land was open country, a cabinetmaker's shop whose proprietor also reproduces Renaissance musical instruments, and a manufacturer of Chinese fortune cookies. There is a glimpse of the open river that is the only one to be had between the solid pier fronts from 14th Street a mile north to Battery Park two miles south. A book store flourishes mysteriously beside a worn-out parish cathedral. These separate features, the bad and the worst, the good and the surprising, are mingled inextricably in a community, that is a rare and valuable part of a city. The crime rate, a useful index of squalor, is one of the lowest in New York. The residents possess a pride of place as great as can be seen in any truly urban neighborhood.

By truly urban, I mean that this is not a small town isolated within the ocean of the city. There are some superficial resemblances to surburbia: of a Saturday morning, residents, who until their designation didn't know each other as well as they do now, nevertheless felt the security of familiarity enough to nod to each other or even stop to talk while doing the week-end chores. Hudson Street, actually the lower end of Eighth Avenue, is, for the four blocks that constitute the eastern boundary of this special area, a marvelously diverse artery; it is a shopping center that sells nearly everything but garden tools—and here the similarity with suburbia ends. Hudson Street's traffic flows north, one way, rapidly, over a rough cobblestone surface, and its broad sidewalks support an amazing variety of pedestrians. These are canny people; they ignore the vehicular traffic. Whoever it is that operates all those cars and trucks, they are strangers just passing through. The degree of sophistication necessary to allow sharing their part of the city with strangers, also recognizes in the act of sharing that it is with the resident themselves that true ownership resides. Suburbs do not tolerate strangers—a city is made up of them.

The history of the White Horse Tavern can typify in miniature this congregation of strangers. The tavern was originally a coach stop. Later, as the city grew north, it became a bar for the predominantly Irish immigrant population. More recently, it was given some sort of fame as a favorite hangout of Dylan Thomas, and now workers and intellectuals imbibe peacefully together. The residents of the last ten years in the West Village are for the most part professionals: lawyers, artists,

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editors, people with definite ideas on how they want to live, and bent on achieving a personal expression in the design of their homes. There are about a hundred Puerto Rican families in the area, and their integration is, though not complete, very successful.

A number of industries bring non-residents to the area. The largest is a processor of non-ferrous metals. The Norwegian-American Lines shares its docks at the foot of Christopher Street with two passenger vessels of Italian registry, and the sound of rollicking Scandinavian and Latin sailors is popular up and down Christopher Street. There are enough sailors to be secure in their own company and not cause trouble in anyone else's. The ships support a number of marine maintenance machine shops.

Sailors by night, post office workers and callers by day, truckers by day and night, industrial white collar workers from nine to five, residents leaving just before nine and returning just after five, shoppers at all times of the day and evening, all make this area a highly trafficked and heavily patrolled beat. Or—on a hot summer night, with strollers from Greenwich Village come to catch a cool river breeze at the crumbling dock once used by the Hoboken Ferry and not yet converted to some sanitized purpose, with tenement dwellers on their balconies, with idlers from the Three Penny Opera a block east taking a fast look at the river before retreating to the dense interior of Manhattan, with music coming from windows—a hot summer night is constant and lively commotion. On a foggy night, the familiar sound of the Governor's Island fog horn is close and mournful, sounding an organ chord two Es an octave apart and the A in between. It is these sounds that make the area alive.

In the West Village, rich and poor live close together in houses built mostly in the 19th century: tenements that are quite solid and have apartments with large rooms, and many privately remodeled three- and four-floor brick attached houses with gardens behind. Because the price of real estate has been low, the area has accommodated both people of means who wanted to remodel and tenants content with space in which they were not overcrowded. One senses that these residents have been able to express choice, that these homes weren't merely provided but were made by their occupants. It is a process that took a great deal of time and has achieved a solid stability. In the best sense, one can say that *this* is urban renewal.

The amount of privately financed rehabilitation of century-old and run-down buildings in the area is prodigious. Assessed values have risen steadily and real values have increased by millions of dollars. A quick run-down of figures shows that there are 710 units with 1,765 people living in them, 399 of whom are children. The average monthly rent is $65.30—which is quite low for the city—and the average apartment has 3.2 rooms; 1.3 rooms per person, and $20.37 rental per room per month. The population density is 104 people on an acre, perhaps a little low, and accounted for by the amount of land given over to industrial use. But the figure is nearly ideal according to current planning elsewhere in the city.

II

The city has made the mistake of confusing low-rent areas with slums, a mistake only possible because the planners have so tenacious a grip on the idea of what a city *should* look

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like. Low rent equals slum particularly when a second equation makes urban clutter synonymous with blight. But diversity *is* clutter and no two ways about it. Planners have done much to unbuild New York by working backwards from their procedural attack: that is, in order to get any major construction underway, they seem to have concentrated their attention on the difficulty of getting the cumbersome machinery cranked up and operating of its own inertia before they had a chance to think either of what they might build or of the appropriateness of the area in which they might build it. Over and over again, they have substiuted monumental projects for the older urban clutter—a process which the law encourages and virtually requires.

When federal moneys are used for Title I, one very large stipulation is made: construction may not cover more than about 20% of the cleared land. In other words, to protect the investment new housing must not repeat the faults of the overcrowded slum it is replacing. Buildings must be surrounded by a *cordon sanitaire* of sacred grass; ventilation between buildings will magically keep the area as sweet as a lamb's bleat, and children, led by the prophet Moses, will be reintroduced to their rightful heritage of nature, sun and freedom. Only it doesn't work that way. And from the number of times it hasn't worked, the citizens of New York have a right to expect that their prophets might have learned a lesson.

What the prophets have learned is that people object to having their homes demolished. But a prophet is a prophet, and he knows what is best even if he has to resort to force to provide it. The machinery must be gotten into operation despite opposition, and this means again commitment to an inexorable plan before a study can be made of the area on which it will be imposed.

For the West Village it was proposed that six of the fourteen blocks be given over to industrial revelopment, and that all residential uses be confined to the remaining eight blocks. The inventory of housing units was to be doubled on a little more than half the land, providing a net gain of only about 350 apartments. It was thought that some 35 million dollars would be required for the project.

Now, the planners have a very difficult problem—how to put twice the number of people on half the land, while leaving eighty per cent of the site given over to sylviculture. There is only one answer: straight up. High-rise apartments are the only possible solution. To do this, however, all remaining eight blocks will have to be consolidated into one plot to provide a base sufficiently broad from which may rise the requisite number of floors. Having started with a coherent, integrated neighborhood of great diversity with small blocks and maximum variety in residents, houses and apartments, Urban Renewal will substitute a high-rise project of a scale totally out of keeping with the surrounding area, whose streets, that once knit the nieghborhood into the rest of the city, will be removed, and whose apartments, stacked one above another in perfect duplication, will be about as distinguishable as the salt pretzels hawked from a tall wooden dowel.

A high-rise project, clutching a grassy plot to its center, resembles nothing so much as a wagon train turned in a circle to fend off the Indians. This makes sense only if strangers from the city-at-large are regarded as Indians,

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a useless concept.

Two more pressures are exerted to make such a project design inadvertable. One is from Washington, from where, in effect, a hog call sounds forth: "Come and get it, if you don't some other city will!" And the other pressure is exerted by local real estate developers, the new millionaires, who want a booty to exist so they might cut in for a sizable chunk of it. Therefore the project is good, and its opposite, by simple logic, bad. There is no other explanation to the planning dictum that mixed uses, residential and industrial, are evil. This isn't what the machinery produces.

Obviously, what gets developed is the land, not the communities that live on it and make use of it. Nor are the new projects designed for the old residents. In the West Village, 350 apartments for 35 million dollars sounds very much like a 100 grand a pad, and the likelihood of any of the present site tenants affording to return to the location is remote. Mrs. Jane Jacobs points out that if the city planners were really serious about raising the tax base, a far simpler way of doing it would be to help the lower-income class rise unobstructed to their destined middle-class status, rather than pulling the land out from under them. But the more citizens object, the more justified the City Planning Commission feels in masking its intentions and subverting the law in the name of progress. The more they hide, the more is hidden from them, and the more likely that the machinery, uninstructed, will spit out another high-rise monstrosity precisely where its dead presence is most cataclysmic —obliterating lively urban clutter.

III

The residents of the West Village had two days, one a holiday, George Washington's Birthday, to stop the city's request for permission to seek $350,000 in planning funds.* Walter S. Fried, former Regional Federal Housing Administrator and approver of Robert Moses's Title I projects, now Vice-Chairman of the Housing and Redevelopment Board pushed the request for funds before the Board of Estimate: "It is only money for a study," he assured the small knot of very angry citizens who showed up in opposition, "there isn't any plan." Even the Board of Estimate found this hard to take and postponed the vote until the next month.

The Saturday following the postponement large numbers of West Village residents turned out for a hastily announced meeting. The Committee to Save the West Village was formed, with a particularly skillful and energetic woman as its chairman. Mrs. Jane Jacobs, resident in the area, seasoned veteran of clashes with city officials over a number of events vital to Greenwich Village, is proof again of the availability of specialists in urban communities. Mrs. Jacobs is an editor of *Architectural Forum,* and the author of a book about the mistakes of city planning.**

The bad faith of the city officials served to unite the neighborhood in

* No one has made a serious effort to explain why quite so much money, $25,000 a block, is necessary. Governor Rockefeller a week later requested funds to make an over-all survey of the entire city of Albany, and thought $150,000 sufficient.

** *Death and Life of Great American Cities,* Random House, $5.95. The best comparison I can make in describing the volume is to say that it resembles an extremely lively study of geology: we see this outcrop and, over there, rock similar to it. Mrs. Jacobs has deduced connective strata that relate the interdependence of urban formations; she has made clear the organization of seemingly unorganized urban clutter.

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unanimous opposition. Suddenly, an extremely complicated business became a matter of communal knowledge.

In 1940, West Greenwich Village was put on the City Master Map as a blighted area; in 1949 the designation was contested and finally removed in 1954. I should note that there is in the history of West Village evidence enough that the area was once a slum. The population before the Depression was three times what it is now, overcrowded into about the same number of housing units. But the process of spontaneous regeneration proves that there was enough interest and liveliness in the area to retain a stable concentration of residents who might have left, but preferred to stay. Those who have moved in more recently were obviously attracted by this liveliness and added to it. One of the first evidences of bad faith was the City Planning Commission's false use of the old map (1949) in making their proposal.

Residents were suddenly able to quote long lists of figures and cite past outrages of Title I. They knew that enormous sums of money in Title I had been wasted by arrogance, stupidity and venality. Favored speculators had been appointed as sponsors of redevelopment projects even though some of them had not the first piece of equipment with which to do the redeveloping. Title I has meant wholesale demolition of desirable property, the massive dislocation of tenants, the complete destruction of neighborhoods and the overcrowding of those adjacent. Title I sponsors held the land to which they had title and milked the rents from the gift real estate on it for as long as they could get away with it; in some instances this meant that tenants paid full rent for three years or longer on property that, since it was soon to come down, needn't be kept up—no heat, no hot water, bad garbage disposal, infestation; if in fact the area hadn't been a slum when so designated, it rapidly became so. Developers, after having held the Title for a profitable length of time, defaulted and sold out, only to turn up as sponsors on another project. Lincoln Square, the Coliseum, Washington Square Village, Bellevue, Cadman Plaza were first the names of projects and later cries of anguish.

The precise moment that residents were most alarmed and angry at the thought of being planned for, the City chose to encourage a prospective sponsor. It is clear that this puppet group was being used by the city in an effort to achieve the semblance of community support. This puppet group, ostensibly a middle-income, co-operative, limited stock company, who, if selected as sponsor of any part of the redevelopment, would have had as much right to the enormous participation in sponsor, builder and management profits as any developer of the order of Tishman or Uris. That this profit was to be made at the expense of residents, rankled the most placid on-site breast. It became clear that this favored group of citizens were merely a tool of the City Planning Commission, and were themselves undecided whether their best policy was to insinuate or overwhelm—citizen pitted against citizen was a grim, bitter battle.

The month between votes was filled wtih clouds of war and much letter-writing. It was a very early phase of the battle. The second trip to the Chamber of the Board of Estimate at City Hall saw the faithful turn out 700 strong on a sleety day. Again the proposal was postponed, but this time the impression was strong that the city

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officials, alarmed at the vehemence of the opposition, wanted time to regroup their forces.

During this month, the Committee to Save the West Village made contacts with other beleaguered civic groups. Brooklyn had been ambushed, and Cooper Square. Uptown, the very latest look in Urban Renewal, the West Side Urban Renewal Project, in a section where the blocks were large to begin with, and demolition could be kept to a minimum, was running into some very vicious weather. Chief victims were the Puerto Ricans, least able to defend themselves. Here, out of 16,000 families, 10,000 were to be relocated, somehow, and of these, 8,000 were low income. With such people the West Villagers sought an alliance.

Also during this time legal aid arrived. A staff of three lawyers was recruited, one a resident, one on loan from one of the Greenwich Village organizations opposed to the proposal, and the third donated by the State Assemblyman from the district. The Urban Renewal laws were gone over with enormous care and vigilance, and the Committee was prepared for the third vote at City Hall.

Mayor Wagner, dragged in as the chief responsible figure, announced that he was sorry the thousand-odd residents had been inconvenienced by coming to the meeting, but the matter of the Urban Renewal proposal was being turned back to the City Planning Commission. They would schedule a public hearing, he said, and discharge their legal duty.

One resident remarked, "Now the virgin is raped, they are setting up a romance schedule for her." The damage had been done: banks had blacklisted the area and would not allow further mortgage money to be invested there. Deals had fallen through. Sleep had been lost, feelings hurt, property libeled. The Mayor's plea to disperse met cries of outrage, but the administrative mill ground on, and succeeding calendar numbers were called above an angry furor. The air in the Chamber was charged with rebellion.

The Committee to Save the West Village took the position that since the proposal was "illegally and improperly" before the Board of Estimate, those august gentlemen were in danger of compounding a capricious and arbitrary act whose consequences could lead to damage suits against the city. This position was sustained by the eleventh-hour arrival of papers still wet with the signatures of a Justice of the Supreme Court of New York. Dramatically, the tables were turned. Orders were served on a surprised Mayor, on the City Planning Commission on the Housing and Redevelopment Board, on the Board of Estimate and the Corporation Counsel. The order answerable in court the following Monday, enjoined the defendants to show just cause why they should not be restrained from the pursuit of their proposal.

Judge Henry Clay Greenberg heard the case. He was dumbfounded at the city's defense, or pretended to be. Residents whose boiling point had been reached too many times were weary with yet another outrage.

Section 72-m of the Municipal Code described above requires a public hearing *before* any area can be designated as blighted. It was this law that the plaintiffs cited. The city replied that they had not been proceeding under that law at all but under the older 72-k, which provided for the complete demolition of an area and which, incomprehensibly, required no public hearing. Judge Greenberg sternly lec-

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tured the Counsel representing the city. In the name of "decency and common morality" taxpayers should be heard on any subject that affected them so profoundly. However, in his decision, although he found "great merit in the plaintiff's case . . . fortunately for all parties concerned the point was academic as a public hearing is to be held." Judge Greenberg gave as an example of the backwardness of the city's procedure, a theoretical case in which a building was constructed, and *then* all parties concerned could argue whether or not it was the proper kind of structure. It was clear where the Judge's sentiments lay, but he was not about to give away what would have amounted to a very lucrative damage suit against the city.

Now it is up to the Committee to answer the accusation that the West Village is "blighted, substandard and insanitary." The residents remain guilty till they may prove their innocence.

WHAT IS CLEAR in all of this is that the city has changed neither its objectives nor its tactics.

What finally will convince city officials of their error is not at all clear. The kind of thinking that produces the blight of conformity and deadness is in evidence even to the highest levels of the Federal government: Urban Renewal is good business, therefore it is good housing and sound city management. Increasingly the roles of real estate speculator and city planner are becoming interchangeable. If the city is as natural a state to civilized man as a game preserve to lions and gnus, it makes little sense to appoint a big-game hunter as head keeper. Mr. J. Clarence Davies, Jr., Chairman of the Housing and Redevelopment Board is also President of the J. Clarence Davies, Inc., Realtors; and Mr. James A. Felt, Chairman of the City Planning Commission, is the chief officer of Jas. Felt & Co., Inc., Real Estate. Under Mr. Felt, a Mr. Abraham Lindenbaum of the Brooklyn law firm of Young and Lindenbaum serves as a member of the City Planning Commission; while wearing another hat, this same Mr. Lindenbaum has processed eviction notices through the State Rent Commission for a client of notorious reputation as a real estate speculator. Albert M. Cole, predecessor of Robert Weaver as Administrator of the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, now holds an executive position with Reynolds Aluminum Company in charge of that firm's sponsorship of Urban Renewal Projects. While he makes a sponsor's and realtor's profit using long-term Federal mortgage funds, he is promoting the use of aluminum in construction—surely a curious and special use of such funds.

What these realtors are apparently incapable of seeing is that when they kill a city's diversity, they kill the city. And that tenants, price-tagged and segregated, are then made subject to a conformity of living space that is reinforced by the disengagement of the project from the fabric of the city. Without an environment that offers liveliness and urban possibility, the city dweller's spirit is cut off from the deepest springs of communal satisfaction and personal creativity.

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NEW YORK COULD DIE

Edward T. Chase

I

The giant city of today lives by a miracle: it survives contradictions of policy and endless administrative improvisations. But if its life is miraculous, then its decline, even its terminal illness, is not at all impossible. And in the pathology of cities, circulatory failure ranks high among the list of fatal accidents. The sickness of congestion has become epidemic among our great cities, and New York has not been spared.

Surely most New Yorkers must feel this whenever they travel from one point in the city to another. Miraculous as the completion of the journey may seem, it is almost always a debilitating experience: a compound of exasperation over the difficulties of arrangements, the slowness and the frustrations of delay, fatigue from the crowding and noise, a consciousness of waste, expense, chaos, jostling, soot, stench, and even the possibility of injury or death.

The reminder that a city and its culture can flourish only when millions of persons are so concentrated that communication among them is continuous—this is quite unconsoling. All of us can sense instinctively that while concentration and congestion are similar they are also *different* conditions.

Yet the desirability of congestion is the central issue in the current controversy over "what to do about New York." The city's Commissioner of Traffic, T. T. Wiley, is pressing for the construction of 15 huge parking garages costing $52.5 million in mid-town Manhattan to lure back suburban shoppers. This proposal has been challenged on the grounds that these facilities will surely worsen an already intolerable situation; Wiley's response has been that cities never die of congestion but only of the lack of it. Austin Tobin, director of New York's main transportation agency, the huge Port of New York Authority, shares this view. Second only to his consuming passion for maintaining the Port Authority's high credit standing (so it can market its bonds successfully and perpetuate itself) is Tobin's drive for ever greater traffic flow. "If 34th Street weren't congested we'd be in trouble," says Tobin. In consequence, just under a billion dollars has been invested in Port Authority transport facilities, all designed to produce maximum "traffic flow" in New York. This has achieved a 36 per cent increase in the number of cars entering New York from 1948 to 1956, while the number of persons entering has decreased by 12 per cent.

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Officially, there is no opposition to the theory that congestion is desirable. There is, however, an unofficial opposition by assorted intellectuals, an opposition formidable enough to give officialdom pause. Lewis Mumford in his *New Yorker* series has underscored the folly of the Port Authority's predilection for automotive facilities at the expense of rapid transit and of a rationally balanced network of all kinds of transport, *including walking*. He reports that a horse-drawn truck could average eleven miles an hour in New York City in 1910, against an average speed of six miles an hour for motor trucks today. Wilfred Owen of the Brookings Institution, the author of *Cities in the Motor Age* and *The Metropolitan Transportation Problem,* similarly has challenged the transportation policies of New York's officials. Mumford and Owen are typical of those who speak for what must be called the consuming public. The New York officials responsible for transportation, on the other hand, invariably reflect the city's immediate business and commercial interests. At the September 7, 1960 Planning Commission hearings on the issue of the midtown garages, it was appalling to listen to the testimony of department store chiefs and big builders defending the program in terms of "planning," when short-term profit was clearly the motivation for their appearance.*

Somewhere in between the intellectuals' protest against congestion and its official sanction by the city's brass is the Regional Plan Association, New York's oldest and most respected planning body. The ambiguous attitudes on congestion of this powerful, private, but quasi-official organization is reflected in the fact that after failing for months to make up its mind about the Wiley midtown garage proposal, it finally gave a qualified half-hearted endorsement. So did *The New York Times,* in one of its most depressing accessions to the department store, hotel trade and amusement area lobbyists.

II

Nothing is more tedious than the minutiae of traffic-flow studies that generally passes for discussion of "the transportation problem" in New York. The real issue is reducible to this question: do we take *positive* steps to *discourage* automotive travel in New York City; do we accede to it as an "uncontrollable" fact of life; or do we actually encourage it?

All the publicized questions about the advisability of tax relief and subsidy for passenger railways and mass transit; all the arguments about the 30th Street Expressway, the Narrows Bridge, the Lower Manhattan Expressway, the new lower level for the George Washington Bridge, the extension of Manhattan's rapid rail transit to New Jersey in a connect-

* Mark down March 16, 1961 as the greatest day in the modern history of New York planning. On that date the City Planning Commission, defying the Mayor and the city's most powerful commercial leaders, rejected the midtown garage proposal on the grounds that it would produce congestion and have "serious long-term effects on the integrity and function of the most valuable midtown core area." It represented the city's first official reversal of policy toward the automobile, a shift from promotion to limitation of its use.

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ing loop with Jersey railroads—all these technical questions, urgent though they are, are secondary to the basic problems of congestion and the role of the automobile. And linked to these are questions about housing, the exodus of wealth and talent to the suburbs, and the disintegration of central city residential and commercial areas.

Though signs are mounting of a general public revolt against our masochistic accession to every demand made upon us by the automobile, official policy is still to provide maximum means for auto use. That public opinion is beginning to change is reflected in many obvious ways: the grudging approval of rail tax relief and subsidy; the investigations of the Port of New York Authority; popular recognition that there exists what is called "the urban problem"; awareness of dangerous air pollution (Los Angeles has a $3½ million budget for fighting smog caused by auto exhaust); the rejection of high-tail fins and two-tone cars in middle-class taste-making circles; and a universal dismay at the increase in traffic snarls and the spoliation of rural land. Books like Galbraith's *The Affluent Society,* and W. H. Whyte's *The Exploding Metropolis,* with their cries of alarm over our complacent acceptance of urban decay, have been widely read.

But the revolt has not yet gone anywhere near far enough. In New York, the idea of deliberately *refusing* to build a new bridge or tunnel, in order, as it were, to buck the automobile is unthinkable. The engineers of the Port Authority are aware of Owen's dictum that land use determines traffic volume and flow. But a concrete response to this principle, restricting automotive freedom, remains a matter of occasional speculation. For instance, planner Victor Gruen, among others, has proposed a system of transportation zoning in New York whereby certain streets and avenues would be zoned clear of all automotive traffic and become in effect pedestrian malls; other areas would be restricted to public taxicab and buses only, with no private cars or trucks; and the grid street pattern in still other strictly residential areas would be converted into courtyards and walkways. Some such transportation zoning is essential and decades overdue.

Official response to this notion remains either hostile or uncomprehending. The low level of imagination, intellectual daring, and public zeal in the city government precludes any constructive inquiry, let alone action, along these lines. The usual response is a throwing up of hands: "What can we do? The population is growing. People want to drive their cars. We can't tell them not to. We've got to accommodate them or business would collapse." Stanley Isaacs, the Republican City Councilman and one of the few officials to speak courageously on the congestion issue, points out that a few years back the city had a tax on car ownership to discourage midtown driving and all-day street parking. This idea cannot be revived in the atmosphere created by Wiley, Tobin, *et al.*

NATURALLY a vast number of people prefer to commute by automobile. Over 500,000 cars (with an average of only one and a half occupants per car) enter New York City from outlying counties every

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day. The decrepit equipment of public transportation (an estimated 75 per cent of urban passenger railway cars are over 40 years old), the fantastically overcrowded subways, the inadequate range of subway and bus service both geographically and in terms of time; the slowness of buses navigating on streets jammed with cars—all militate against the individual's free selection of public over private transportation.

However, the privilege of private choice in transportation is no longer feasible. The urban resident cannot decide whether or not to pay for water, fire, police and sanitation services. These are basic necessities, needs held in common. Similarly, the time is upon us when mass transportation must be supported on a compulsory basis, through taxation and through restrictions upon private car usage. If this is not done, within a decade New York's entire metropolitan region will be unalterably debased.

Now, such a decision—to prohibit cars, to invest in mass transportation systems—would decisively modify the planning of all our planning agencies: the Port of New York Authority, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, the Transit Authority, the City Planning Commission, the Traffic Department, and such quasi-official bodies as the Regional Plan Association and the Metropolitan Regional Council. The logic of the situation would call for, even compel, the creation of an over-all metropolitan planning body with the power in the tri-state New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area in order to make the planning decisions which hitherto have been made by a melange of agencies. (New York's transportation system is now operated by 25 public agencies and private operators and regulated by the independent decision of at least 100 agencies.) It would mean that large projects, such as bridges, tunnels and highways for auto travel, would no longer be planned on the defeatist criterion that the public has made a commitment to the automobile and that facilities must be provided regardless of their impact upon the total environment. It would mean instead an arbitrary rejection of this public preference, if preference it really is (who knows?), in favor of mass transportation facilities, themselves planned with reference to basic considerations of efficient land-use. Long-term goals would be set for residential areas, for recreation, for parks, for schools, for commercial, industrial and business areas. Just as the present surrender to the automobile has set in motion a vicious circle of ever greater congestion and of an evermore impossible operating climate for mass transportation facilities, *a reversal of this policy would reinvigorate such facilities.* Fewer cars would mean increased rail passenger revenue, buses less encumbered by automotive jams, reduced expenses for policing and engineering, more money for transit investment and so on.

III

The possibilities for a qualitative improvement in the city as a place in which to live and work would then be incalculable: cleaner air (electrically powered bus service is a distinct possibility), quieter, uncluttered streets, deference to pedestrian amenities such as malls,

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squares, plazas, trees, even fountains. It is true that the "quality sell" is a hard sell to politicians and businessmen. But the *economic* corollary *is* persuasive to these groups. The blunt economic truth that must be borne upon them is that surrender to the automobile means ultimate disaster to the mass transportation system. And their collapse, or even a serious further deterioration and limitation in their performance, would mark the end of growth for New York both qualitatively and quantitatively. New York would begin a period of general decline. As of today, two-thirds of the three million people that enter Manhattan every weekday are still using mass transportation facilities. But whereas back in 1924, only 10 per cent of those entering Manhattan used automobiles, now 22 per cent do. About 137,000 more cars enter the area daily than in 1948. All told, four million cars are registered in the New York metropolitan area. Progress? Measure against this the fact that there has been a concurrent decline in patronage of rail commuter service to and from New York. Lines are shutting down; others threaten to price themselves out of the market. The Hudson Tubes, for example, now carry less than a third the number of passengers they carried back in 1927.

The sheer physical factor of space needed for car storage should be sufficient to give New York's officials pause. One car takes the equivalent of the office space of two workers. Real estate is the prime source for municipal tax revenue, but the sheer storage of vehicles, that is, parking, represents a purely non-productive use of space. Roughly 5.3 per cent of New York's central business district space is now so devoted. But in Cleveland it is 25.6 per cent and in Los Angeles an appalling 40 per cent. Any acceleration of this trend in jam-packed New York City would have the most deleterious effect.

The fact is that mass transport facilities such as commuter rail lines are much less expensive to build and maintain than highways capable of handling comparable numbers of people. And no one in the Port of New York Authority, in Detroit or in any other temple of automotive worship can refute the axiom that an express highway for automobiles can handle only one-tenth the hourly passenger load of a comparable mass transit system.

This does not mean that highways should cease to be built. There is a close and necessary relationship between the growth rate of our gross national product and the ton miles that are moved by trucking. The reason for this is that today we have vast dispersed urban regions that can often only be served by trucks. But to recognize this and to build the needed highways accordingly is not to concede the unrestricted right of private car usage within New York City itself. Nor can the highway interests be permitted to build their freeways ruthlessly through the remaining open rural areas. The most rigorous and delicate planning must be undertaken not only to save the central city from congestive failure but also to preserve for its inhabitants the fast-disappearing open land within the city's regional area. It has been evident for twenty-five years that such decisions cannot be made by a multiplicity of unrelated

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agencies. These decisions must be made by an agency that is responsive to needs that cross both municipal and state lines.

IV

What is at stake here, however, is more than transportation as such or even the problem of congestion. The very population complexion of the city is involved. New York today is in a state of unhealthy segregation. The economically underprivileged, hemmed into the physically run-down slum areas, exist as a vast service and laboring population to the economically privileged groups. These are the wealthy executives who comprise the management of Manhattan-headquartered national businesses, the retired wealthy, the wealthy professionals in medicine, in the communications industries, including publishing, broadcasting, advertising. A large portion of the class group that would normally comprise the various middle grounds between the extremes of advantage and disadvantage cannot or will not choose to live in the city proper since it means inferior schools and recreational facilities, slum housing or an impossible expense for luxury apartments. The consequences of such segregation are many and malignant. The moribundity of the city's residential plant is intensified. Public education suffers a qualitative decline. Economic and cultural opportunities become constricted in a variety of ways.

The surface manifestation of this is the evidence that mass transportation has come increasingly to be used by the poor, while the taxis and private cars choking the streets carry the economic elite. *Properly planned, first-class mass transportation would arrest this trend to population extremes,* bringing in its wake better housing, better schools, a more heterogeneous and better balanced urban residential population.

THE MARXIAN PROPHECY that country and city would merge into a new, undifferentiated environment is being fulfilled in what is called urban sprawl or what French geographer Jean Gottmann calls Megalopolis. The Megalopolis of Gottmann is the urban sprawl from Boston to south of Washington, D. C., with the immense New York metropolitan region as its core. Its mark is waste, the devouring of space, of materials, of credit. In purely economic terms the waste itself has created a feverish prosperity in certain basic industries, those whose products are consumed to feed the American dream of the better life through suburban living. Yet Gottmann observes that the very density of activities and the intensity of movement throughout Megalopolis has become so complex as to be out of control. The frenetic unplanned waste of space and materials may soon reach a point of frustrating the further development of the New York regional economy.

When one shifts from these *economic* considerations of urban sprawl to *social* and *cultural* considerations, the conclusions are still more sobering. In his *Suburbia: Its People and Their Politics,* Robert C. Wood is persuasive in arguing that without the strong, vital central city the suburb becomes a meaningless environment. For one thing, the sought-

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for better schools, leisure, country, efficiencies, etc., are too often not being realized. Wood, like Gottmann, decries the waste of "indulging ourselves in the luxury of recreating small towns over and over again." Furthermore, as he points out, the resulting fragmented metropolitan areas present not only a disfigured, monotonous and boring habitat for the suburbanite, but also make for a weakened center city.

New York epitomizes many of these developments. Yet, owing to its altogether unparalleled richness in terms of human talent and cultural variety, it has still not suffered to the extent of certain other cities of Megalopolis. What I hope emerges from my discussion is the extraordinarily critical role transportation is playing in the drama. Our city officials' bias in favor of the private automobile and their appalling obtuseness in confusing concentration with congestion lead inevitably to the disintegrating development known as urban sprawl. The first step in rehabilitating New York is an imaginative and courageous use of positive restrictions in dealing with the automobile. This is the concept that must enter into the formulation of over-all metropolitan plans. And it must be coupled with equally positive efforts to revitalize the city's mass transportation systems. Hardly another task confronting New York has a higher priority.

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BANNING CARS FROM MANHATTAN*

Percival and Paul Goodman

We propose the banning of all cars from Manhattan Island, except buses, small taxis, vehicles for essential services (doctor, police, sanitation, vans, etc.), and the trucking used in light industry.

The present situation is intolerable and all other proposed solutions of it are uneconomic, disruptive, unhealthy, non-urban or impractical.

With this diminution of traffic, we can, except in certain areas, close off nearly four out of five cross-town streets and every second north-south avenue. These closed roads plus the space now used for off-street parking will give us a great fund of land for neighborhood planning and relocation. (At present over 35 per cent of the area of Manhattan is taken up by the roads.) Instead of the present grid, we can aim at various kinds of enclosed neighborhoods, in approximately 1200 to 1600-foot superblocks. However, it would be convenient to leave the existing street-pattern in the main downtown shopping and business area, in the financial district, and wherever the access for trucks and service cars is imperative. Our aim is to enhance immensely the quality of our city life, with the minimum of disruption of the existing pattern.

The disadvantages of our radical proposal are small. At present, the cars are simply not worth the nuisance they cause. Less than 15 per cent of those daily entering Manhattan south of 61st Street come by private car. The traffic is congested, speed is slow, parking is difficult and increasingly expensive. It is estimated that the cost of new garaging is $20,000 per car; and parking lots are a poor use of land in the heart of a metropolis as well as disruptive of the urban cityscape.

The advantages of our proposal are very great. Important, and immediate, are the relief of tension, noise and anxiety; purifying the air of fumes and smog; alleviating the crowding of pedestrians; the safety of children. Subsequently, and no less importantly, we gain the opportunity of diversifying the gridiron, beautifying the city and designing a more integrated community life. (The expense of an onerous requirement of the Building Code for off-street parking could, of course, be dropped.)

THE PROBLEM and our solution are probably unique to Manhattan, though our experiment would provide lessons elsewhere. Manhattan is a world center of business, buying, style, entertainment, publishing, politics and light manufacture. It is daily visited in throngs by commuters to work, seekers of pleasure, shoppers, visitors on business, and tourists. We have, and need, a dense population; the area is small

* This article will appear also in *Program*, published by the Columbia University School of Architecture.

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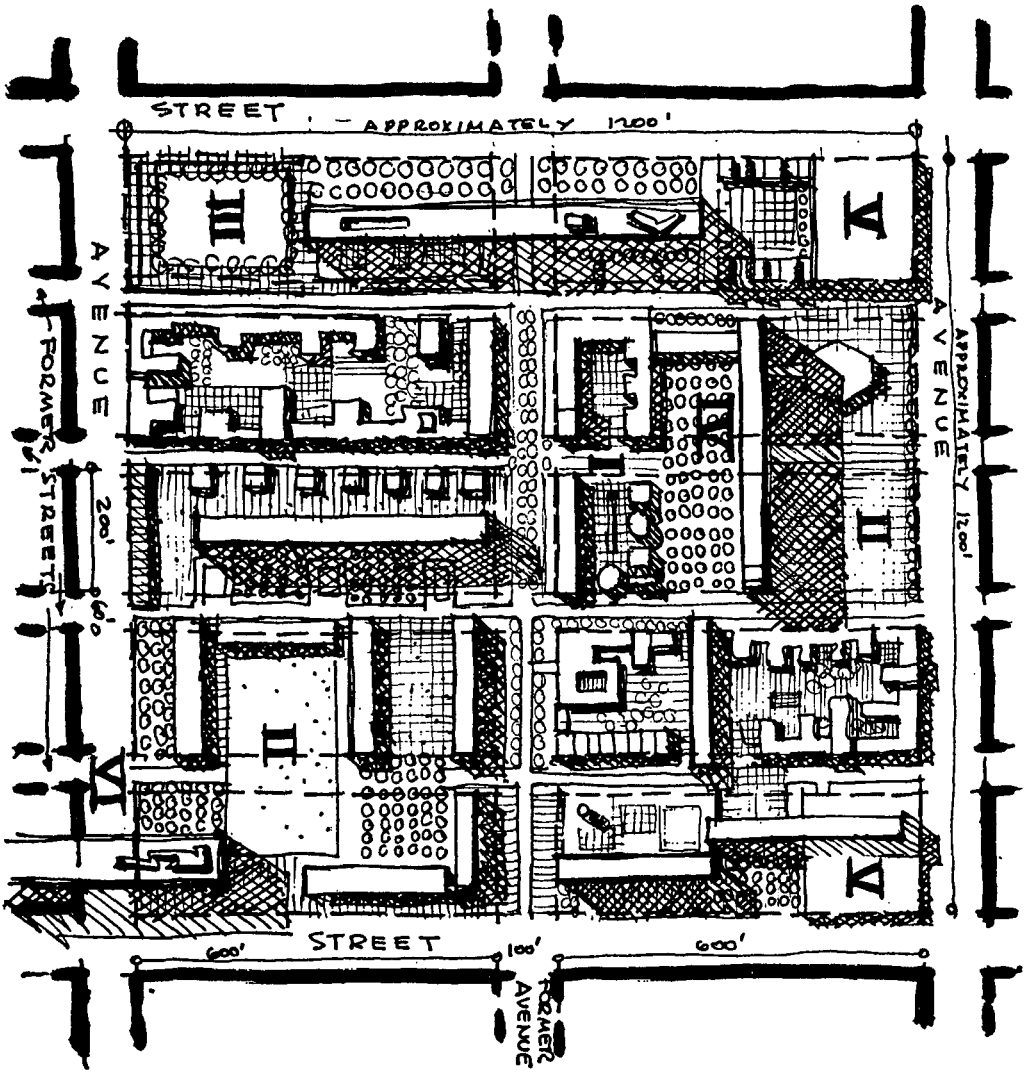

A ten-block area. Density 300-400 to acre. The streets turned into service roads which are also pedestrian walks.

Former traffic area = Avenue: 100′ x 1240′ = 124,000
4 Streets: 1200′ x 240′ = 288,000
412,000 sq. ft.

Gross area ten blocks = 1,612,000 sq. ft. We have added 25 per cent to the usable area.

I. Neighborhood shopping and center.
II. Play and recreation areas.
III. Swimming pool.
IV. Housing with School in lower floors.
V. Non-nuisance factories.
VI. Bridge bldg.—office or apartment usage.

Balance is housing for various incomes—some new, some old.

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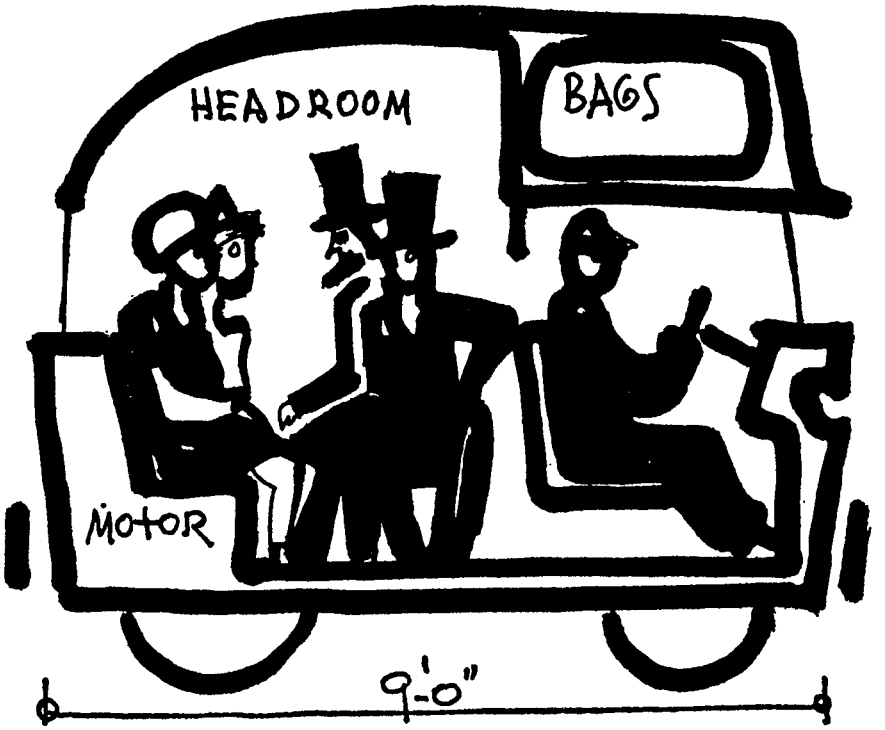
and strictly limited. Because of this, Manhattan can easily be a place as leisurely as Venice. It can be a lovely pedestrian city, for it does not sprawl. In the first appendix to *Communitas*, we developed a scheme for Manhattan paying especial attention to improving the rivers and developing riverside neighborhoods (routing traffic up through the center). We now believe that a first and easy step toward achieving a livable city is the elimination of most of the traffic altogether.

Manhattan has been losing population to the suburbs and near countryside with increase of daily commutation. A more spacious and desirable center would reduce, perhaps stop this trend. And, within the city itself, it is possible to decrease commutation. The ILGWU Housing at 34th Street and the proposed forty-story residential buildings of the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association show the way. It might be feasible to establish *a municipal agency to facilitate people's living near their work if they so choose, by arranging exchanges of residence advantageous to all parties.* This should be possible in many thousands of cases; it is certainly worth trying.

(This kind of simple expedient is just what our society usually neglects. There is no agency in the city to attend to the multi-purpose problems of community, the integration of the functions of life. Cf. *Communitas*, Appendix C.)

2. *Peripheral Parking*

The banned private cars can be accommodated by various kinds of peri-



Goodman's Taxi—Plenty of headroom, maximum speed 40 miles per hour.

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pheral parking. The idea of peripheral parking has been studied by Louis Kahn and Victor Gruen, as well as the present authors.

At present many thousands of cars of commuters are left at suburban railway stops and at more or less convenient subway stations in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. This is because of the obvious undesirability, from the motorist's point of view, of driving them into Manhattan. We propose simply to generalize this commonsense decision in order to use it as a basis for important further advantages.

We propose, in addition, the construction of multi-purpose piers in the Hudson and East Rivers for parking cars entering at the main bridges and tunnels. These piers could be developed for promenade, recreational and even residential use and might be considered as part of the river development recommended in *Communitas*.

These piers would be served by bus and taxi. Consider a particular case. A large store, e.g., Macy's, might provide pier-limousines for commuting shoppers, including the service of delivering packages to the parked cars.

3. *Roads*

We would keep the broad and highly commercial cross-streets, 14th, 23rd, 42nd, 57th, 59th, etc., as two-way bus and taxi arteries; and also 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, Broadway, 9th and 11th Avenues. These should provide adequate circulation for the residual traffic. (As indicated above, we would keep the existent street pattern in the midtown section—from 23rd to 59th Streets—to serve the shops, theaters, etc., and also wherever there is a special case. Every street would have to be studied individually.)

All other streets would become pedestrian walks which also act as roads for necessary servicing (fire, garbage, mail, etc.).

The proposed grid of through arteries is such that the maximum walk to the nearest bus stop would always be less than a fifth of a mile. Subway entrances would exist as at present. In general, the bus service throughout Manhattan would be expanded, bringing back the 2-deck buses. We must keep in mind that with the ending of congestion and the immense cutting down of pedestrian crossing, the speed limit for taxis and express buses could be raised to 25 or even 30 miles an hour. (Since there would be much less need to cross over, it would be possible to eliminate jay-walking, and perhaps provide pedestrian bridges and tunnels.) *On the whole, given the improvement of the bus-service, most travel about town would be swifter and more convenient than at present with the private cars.*

There would be more taxis. Most of these should be small (half the present length by eliminating trunk space, placing motor under rear seat). It seems absurd for the taxis in a limited speed metropolis to be the same cars designed for travel on superhighways. Best would be electrics.

The remaining gridiron plan of Manhattan is kept; it is practical and when simplified it has a sort of grandeur. But to avoid the boredom of nothing but endless vistas we recommend bridging certain streets with buildings to create other spatial effects. Every street and avenue represents an individual artistic problem.

4. *Neighborhood and Community*

In the long run, the most valuable ideal for New York or any other vast city is to become a large collection of integral neighborhoods sharing a met-

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ropolitan center and metropolitan amenities. The neighborhoods differ since they comprise a wide variety of community functions, administered with relative independence by each neighborhood. Certainly they would not look alike. Consider, for example, that a basically family-residential neighborhood might have a quite autonomous control of its local school, with a certain amount of the neighborhood school-money administered by the local Parents-Teachers Association. The central Board of Education could dictate minimum standards and see to it that underprivileged neighborhoods get a fair cut of the revenue, but it need not stand in the way (as it does at present) of variation and experimentation. Our idea, too, is that local exercise of political initiative on local problems like schooling, housing and planning, would immensely heighten the level of the electorate. A neighborhood should be planned to increase mutual acquaintance of the neighbors and to give them responsibility for the school, market, playground; and such a complex could well serve as the primary municipal electoral unit. Meantime, all the integral neighborhoods share in the great city of the big shops, theaters, hotels, museums and national enterprises. *The aim of integral planning is to create a human-scale community intermediary between the individuals and families and the metropolis; it is to counteract the isolation of the individual in the mass-megalopolis.* Naturally, in a vast region like New York there will be many thousands of persons who choose precisely to be isolated individuals—that might be why they came here—but these too form a distinctive and valuable element in the federal whole, and they can be provided for in the center and in sub-neighborhoods.

Toward the ideal of such a city of federated communities, the simple device of banning the cars and replanning the gridiron is a major step. The new road-pattern allows for superblocks of from six to nine acres. (Stuyvesant Town covers sixteen acres.) With plastic invention and aiming at the maximum variety of landscaping, land use and building height, there is here an unexampled opportunity for dozens of eventual solutions that could surpass in urbaneness and amenity the squares and crescents of 18th Century London. There is space for recreation and play. (The length of a tennis court fits across 9th Avenue; an occasional corner is big enough for a softball field.) Given the large fund of newly available land, now wasted on largely unnecessary and always inconvenient traffic and parking, it is possible to develop neighborhoods in a leisurely fashion, with careful study and with no problems of relocation or dislocation of such neighborhood ties as still exist. *We would especially recommend competitions and public referenda, in order to avoid bureaucratic imposition and to educate the community to awareness and concern.*

5. Means, etc.

The legal problem of the proposed ban should not be difficult. Streets are at present closed off for play and other purposes. The Mayor banned all traffic in the emergency of snow clearance (though his right to do so has been disputed). We have had a vehicle tax; it could be so pegged as to be prohibitive. A prohibitive entry fee could be charged.

The ban should, of course, be leniently enforced to allow for special cases and emergency use (e.g., a family starting out on a trip and loading up). Likewise there must be provision

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A bridge building closing the axis on a traffic street.

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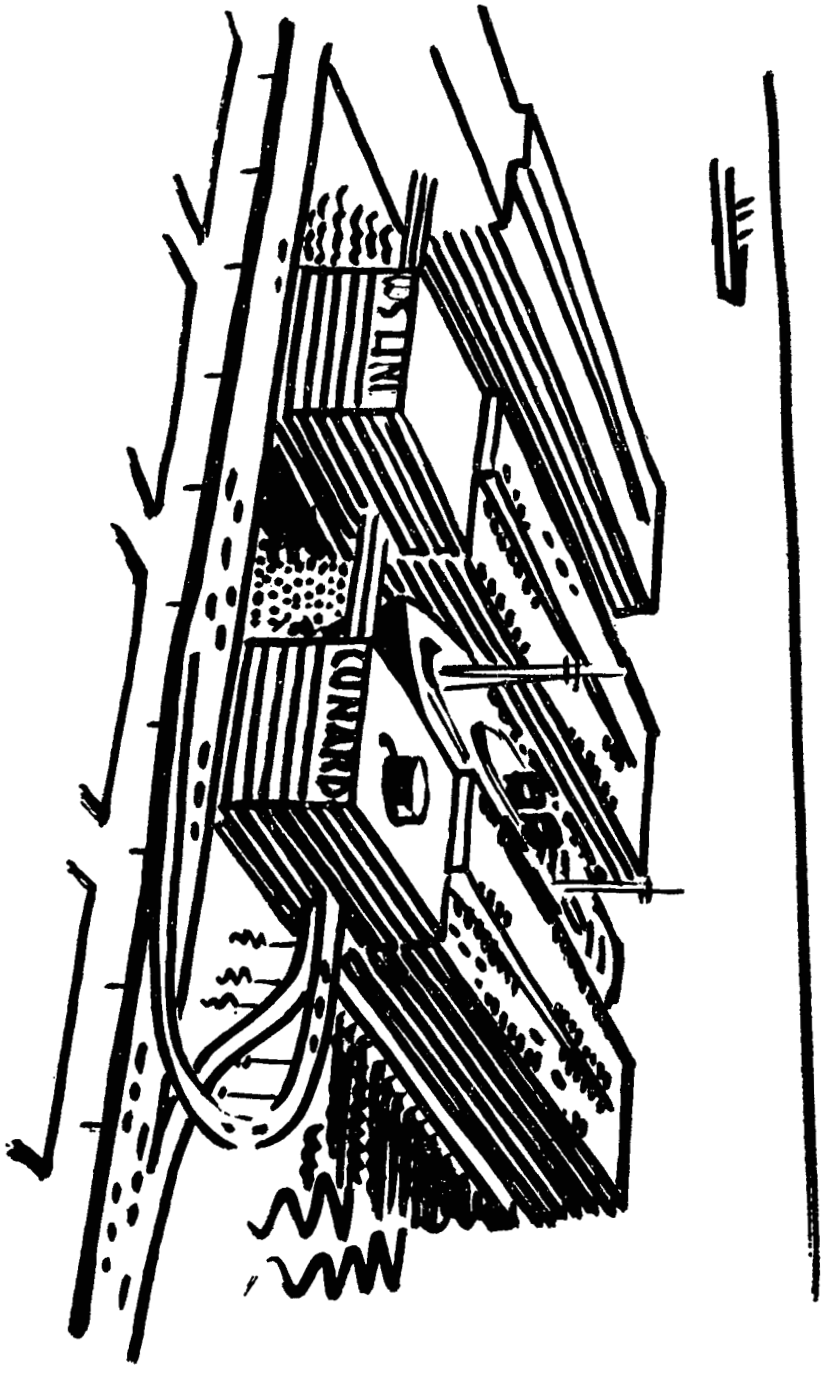

Along the Hudson in the 40's. Pier parking. At the street, offices; at the West; ramp garages.

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for cars to pass over Manhattan, going east and west.

It is likely that the ban on cars could be lifted on weekends, when the truck and bus traffic is much diminished. Especially during the warm months this would be a great convenience for week-end trips.

6. *Conclusion*

The above proposal is simple common sense. The cars have caused many and increasingly severe ills, so that the situation is admittedly reaching a crisis. The proposed solutions—new traffic regulations, new highways, multilevels, underground parking—all bear the typical earmark of American planning: to alleviate an evil by remedies that soon increase the evil. But in this special case of Manhattan, the elementary radical remedy, of getting rid of the cars, would cause very little hardship and have immense and beautiful advantages. (In sprawling cities like Los Angeles or Cleveland, of course, one cannot get rid of the cars.)

To anyone interested in community planning, the chief advantage of our proposal is that it provides opportunity. It does not merely remedy an evil or provide a way to do the same things more efficiently, but it opens the possibility to think about ideal solutions, human values and new ways to do basic things. In general, most big-scale planning and most of what passes for Urban Renewal are humanly indifferent. The quality of life in our city will not be improved by such planning, but by some elementary social psychiatry and common sense.

Finally, conceive that one of our mayoral candidates were convinced of the advantages of this proposal and made it a part of his program in running for office. This is hard to conceive, because it is just such concrete issues that are never offered to the voters; the voters never have real choices to think about, therefore they never learn to think. Instead they vote for personalities and according to ethnic and party groupings; whereas the rival programs are both vague and identical.

If, however, such a plan as this were offered as an important issue, our guess is that the candidate would lose this year, because he would be considered radical and irresponsible; and he would win next time around, when people had had a chance to think it through and see that it made sense.

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ROBERT MOSES, GLUTTON FOR POWER

Fred J. Cook

I

In New York City Robert Moses is the most prominent exponent of the credo that the end justifies the means; that he, "the great doer" always knows best; that the public should shut up, or in any event not be heard, while the genius he personifies works for it generously. The image that emerges is hardly that of a leader of democracy; but then Moses, though giving lip-service to democracy, has never pretended to adhere to its methods. Never once has he been elected to public office; and throughout the years, he has expressed nothing but contempt for the public's elected representatives.

Gifted with a forked tongue, Moses has indulged in the life-long pastime of shriveling with invective all officials who have had the temerity to get in his way, a list that includes virtually every prominent figure in the city and state. In New Deal days he described former Postmaster General James A. Farley as "that ineffable sand, mail and bag man. . . ." A long succession of New York's Mayors has taxed Moses's ingenuity in epithet. Jimmy Walker was "half Beau Brummell and half guttersnipe"; John P. O'Brien, "a winded bull in the municipal china shop"; John F. Hylan, "the raging Bozo of Bushwick"; and J. V. McKee, "a synthetic character which never actually lived on sea or land, puffed up by the press . . . and now in the process of disintegration."

Despite excesses of temper and the domineering ways of an autocrat, he has managed to retain the image of a paragon working wonders within the creaking framework of democracy. How has he been able to accomplish this miracle? Very simply. By the control of money in such unlimited quantities that even the lashed and berated prefer his favor to his enmity.

THE KEY TO MOSES'S power lies in a public-private hybrid of which he has been the chief architect—the Public Authority, object of the almost slavish veneration of the American people, who worship its supposed efficiency, oblivious of the fact that they control it not, it controls them. The Public Authority has made Robert Moses a law unto Robert Moses. He is accountable to no one; his use of the tremendous financial resources placed in his hands may not be questioned or checked by any governmental body, not even by the State Legislature itself.

Using the public authority as his lever, Moses has wielded auto-

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cratic power over billions of dollars—how many billions probably no one except himself exactly knows. Some years ago it was conservatively estimated that he had presided over the expenditure of at least $5 billion of public and semi-public funds, and more billions have passed through his hands since. The control of such vast sums have enabled Moses to tear down homes and businesses so that great concrete arteries may be slashed across the countryside; to condemn and demolish entire neighborhoods and rebuild a great part of New York City to his own taste; to establish parks, playgrounds and public beaches, works of great good, but works in which private contracts and concessions mean veritable fortunes; to control vast networks of bridges and tunnels, collecting millions of dollars in fees that are never reduced, that serve as a tax on the traveling public over which that public has lost all control, that pile up surpluses used to bankroll other and more private enterprises of Czar Moses.

This is power, raw and undiluted—the kind of power that, quite literally, can ruin men who stand in its way. As long ago as 1925, W. Kingsland Macy, later a Congressman from Long Island, became embroiled with Moses over the seizure of some land Moses wanted for one of his projects. Macy subsequently declared to *The New York Times*: "Mr. Moses told me personally that his power was such that he could seize any house, put me out of it and arrest me for trespassing if I tried to get into it again. It may well be that the state should have such powers in reserve for use as a last resort, but it should not be the plaything of an arrogant and arbitrary-minded man. . . . Mr. Moses told me not only that he possessed this arbitrary power, but that he was able to control the press of New York City, so as to hold me up to such obloquy that I would not be able to stand it. . . ."

The events of the next thirty-five years have served only to prove that Moses was not exaggerating. Whether or not he actually controls the New York City press, the fact is indisputable that he has been most generously treated by it. His good works have been lavishly praised; his terrible temper and arrogance have been glossed over as idiosyncracies of genius—and all the while his power has grown. It has grown to such an extent that, within recent years, a new estimate as startling as Macy's statement was made by Charles Abrams, former New York City Rent Administrator. "In my opinion, under present redevelopment laws," Abrams said, "Macy's could condemn Gimbels'—if Robert Moses gave the word."

Obviously, the man who wields such make-or-break power is a man to be courted, a man to be politely venerated, not criticized or angered. For years Robert Moses could do no wrong—not even when he:

- Sold a public street to private interests without consulting the public or the public's officials about it.
- Botched up New York's $1.5 billion Title I slum clearance program by tearing down not only tenements but fine residential buildings, and erecting in their place costly luxury apartments, out of reach of the

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millions who needed new homes—a program so perverted that it provided fewer apartments than it destroyed and succeeded only in intensifying the slum problem.

• Opposed such civil rights measures as the Fair Employment Practices Law, fair educational practices legislation, laws to bar discrimination in public housing—stands which the NAACP denounced as "disastrous to the progress New York City is making in eliminating discrimination against minorities."

• Used millions of dollars in excess toll fees collected from the users of his Triborough bridges and tunnels to build New York's new exhibition hall, the Coliseum, criticized by some experts as an architectural monstrosity and a financial white elephant—but a project that did at least provide a spanking new headquarters for a bank run by a couple of Moses's principal aides.

Any other public official who committed such blunders could hardly expect to survive the experience. Only Robert Moses could stumble so obviously and yet not be touched by a speck of soot. He still represents, for Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, the ideal of an "exemplary" public servant; and anyone who doubted the Governor had only to listen to Mayor Robert F. Wagner this past spring, when Moses found it advisable to surrender a few of his official hats. "You come closer to being the irreplaceable man than any other in the history of our city government," the Mayor wrote his departing commissioner.

II

No doubt the memories of Moses will be varied and enduring. He has cast too large and domineering a shadow for it to be otherwise. Under the circumstances, it becomes intriguing to trace his career.

It is perhaps important, first, to stress that Moses's whole life has been divorced from too intimate contact with the common herd. Not for him the hard scrabble up the road of success. Not for him the humbling give-and-take of political wars. He began life at the top; he began public service in unfettered roles very close to the top; and he has kept himself and his power isolated from check or restraint by the public. Paternalism comes to him naturally.

Moses was born on Dec. 18, 1888, in New Haven, Conn., the son of Emanuel and Bella Moses. His father was a successful businessman, his mother the daughter of another successful merchant. His family background was one of comfortable wealth—private tutors, private schools, trips to Europe every other year. One brief exposure to military school in Poughkeepsie proved unsatisfactory; Moses rebelled at the discipline. He was, however, mentally brilliant. He entered Yale before he was 17; he was a good athlete on the track and swimming teams, won prizes in mathematics, Latin and public speaking, made Phi Beta Kappa and was a big wheel in campus affairs.

By the time he graduated in 1909, Moses had determined to devote himself to public service. It was a choice made easier by the fact that he never had any serious money worries. The kind of resources on which

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Moses has always been able to draw were shown in 1925 when his father died, leaving an estate of $322,763. Of this more than $200,000 later came to Moses after the death of his mother in 1930. Such solid family finances permitted the young man to ground himself for his future career with academic thoroughness. He enrolled at Oxford, where he received a BA with honors in 1911, an MA in 1913. Returning to New York, he wrote a doctoral thesis on British civil service and received a PhD in political science from Columbia. For a brief period during World War I, he worked on the shipbuilding program of the Emergency Fleet Corporation at Hog Island, found himself entangled in governmental red-tape (ever after his pet aversion) and quickly resigned.

His real rise to prominence began with the election of Alfred E. Smith as Governor of New York in November, 1918. Highly recommended to Smith, Moses became chief of staff of a bi-partisan committee which aimed at reforming the cumbersome machinery of state government. Moses prepared the committee's report. When one of his recommendations, a unified state park system to be financed by a $15 million bond issue, was approved by the Legislature, he was appointed by Smith to head the new setup as chairman of the State Council of Parks.

Operating from this position of appointive power, Moses was soon planning the great Jones Beach State Park on the Long Island ocean-front and the network of expressways that would carry visitors to it. This first large project brought him into conflict with the gentry living on large Long Island estates. The estate owners objected to the invasion of their sylvan retreat by hordes of New Yorkers, and protested bitterly that Moses's expressways would ruin their fox-hunting. Moses, of course, bludgeoned down all opposition in a battle that carried all the overtones of a crusade for the rights of the poor against high-society fox-hunters. The image so born has endured for most of Moses's lifetime despite the fact that abundant evidence indicates it is far from accurate.

Though the fair-haired boy of Al Smith, Moses was not at all a favorite of Smith's successor, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt retained Moses as head of the state park system, but failed to reappoint him as Secretary of State, a post to which Smith had elevated him. Moses quickly became a caustic critic of Roosevelt, and later of the New Deal and all its ways; but the setback he had received was purely temporary. When Fiorello LaGuardia swept into office as Mayor of New York at the head of a reform administration, he promptly called upon Moses to be the city's Park Commissioner. Under the corrupt Tammany Hall regimes that had preceded LaGuardia, the management of the parks and park concessions had become riddled with graft. Moses, with a great burst of efficiency, swept out the grafters, and so another strand was woven into the legend of the energetic and incorruptible public servant.

Only once in his lifetime has Moses submitted himself to a test at the polls. That was in 1934 when he ran for Governor on the Republican ticket against Herbert H. Lehman. He had the audacity—or perhaps one should call it the insensitivity—to propose a two per cent sales tax in the

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midst of the depression. Lehman snowed him under by an avalanche of some 800,000 votes, the worst licking any gubernatorial candidate had ever taken. Ever since, Moses has shunned the electoral process and concentrated on collecting those official hats that can be donned by appointment and that give him a colossal power unchecked by the public whose life his actions so greatly affect. Until early this year, when he decided to devote his talents to running the 1964 World's Fair at a salary of $100,000 annually, Moses held ten such important posts, only two of them salaried.

Just a listing of the ten official hats under which Moses stored his power indicates the scope of his activities. He was New York City Commissioner of Parks at $25,000 a year; New York State Power Authority Chairman at $10,000 a year, with control over the tremendous power resources of the St. Lawrence Seaway project; chairman of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, operating a network of vital tunnels and bridges including the Triborough Bridge, the Queens Midtown Tunnel and the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel; a member and the dominant power on the City Planning Commission, the City Construction Coordinator and the Chairman of the Mayor's Committee on Slum Clearance, a network of interlocking positions that gave him almost dictatorial say over what sections of the city should be torn down and redeveloped—and how; director of planning and construction for Civil Defense; chairman of the State Council of Parks; President of the Long Island State Park Commission; and President of the Jones Beach State Parkway Authority.

ANYONE WHO HAS any idea of what such concentrations of power mean can begin to appreciate the stranglehold Moses has clamped on New York City. When a man is building expressways and tunnels and bridges, when he is demolishing and rebuilding huge square-block areas in the heart of the greatest city in the nation, and when he has virtually complete control over the issuance of contracts running into billions of dollars, it is obvious that he has the power to confer, or to withhold, enormous favors.

The claque of fulsome admiration that has enshrined Robert Moses and all his works is, then, little more than the concomitant of awesome power. The workings of this power are revealed in many ways. One of its least appreciated aspects lies in the opportunities it gives Moses for the cultivation of friends on many diverse and influential levels. For instance, the bond issues of his various authorities, like the State Power Authority, are gilt-edged investments, much sought after, usually selling at a premium. Moses, as ruler of the empire, is in a position to see that the right people are accommodated with the rights blocs of investment. In the contracting and construction fields, his influence is even more significant. It is seldom realized that Public Authorities like those over which Moses presides are not bound by the kind of regulations that restrict governmental agencies: they can confer multi-million dollar contract favors without competitive bidding. A graphic example of this

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was the action of Moses's Triborough Authority in awarding a $20 million contract for work in connection with the new Narrows Bridge, without bidding, to a construction company that happened to employ his son-in-law, Richard J. Olds. Even in areas where competitive bidding is required by law, as in the slum clearance program, Moses's influence in the contracting field is such that the competition is not even a formality. In project after project, when the day to open bids came, there was just *one* bidder—the one, naturally, on whom Moses had bestowed his blessing in advance.

III

Moses reveals himself most clearly in his worship of things and contempt for people. In 1959 he banned free Shakespeare performances in Central Park because they were injurious to the grass. When this raised a storm, he tried to win his point by circulating a vicious letter reflecting on the political opinions and character of the producer. Eventually, Shakespeare won and Moses lost, but the whole tempest was typical of the autocratic Park Commissioner. He can't be bothered arguing with people who get in his way, and he doesn't really give a damn about what happens to them. Once at a Board of Estimate meeting, he gave vent to his scorn and impatience at the dilatory processes of democracy. "You're wasting my time as a public official by allowing too many people to talk," he snapped. When a board member asked Moses whether, if he were running a meeting, he wouldn't let the people talk, Moses retorted: "No, I would not!"

During the mass destruction of homes that accompanied his slum clearance activities, callous developers whom he sanctioned let victims freeze in apartments for lack of heat, ignoring every rule that provided for their relocation in adequate housing. The brutal treatment of the city's masses was repeated in project after project until it became an undeniable city scandal. Moses took two tacks: first, he denied the obvious and insisted with his usual vehemence that nothing in his projects fell seriously short of perfection; secondly, he intimated that people didn't matter anyway. To one critic he said bluntly: "Look, in 10 years, you'll have forgotten all about the people, and you'll just thank me for the projects."

Despite such incidents, Moses remains the important man beloved by important men. Virtually untarnished is the myth of his perfection and efficiency. This myth endures, is endlessly repeated—though there is evidence enough that Moses often falls far short of perfection, far short of even ordinary competence.

One of the most revealing pieces of evidence is the now-celebrated Tavern-on-the-Green imbroglio of 1956. The tavern is a swank, high-priced rendezvous in Moses's demesne in Central Park. It is operated under a lease arrangement by concessionaires evidently very much in Moses's good graces. Suddenly, in the spring of 1956, Moses decided to take over a children's playground area in the park and pave it for an expanded parking lot for his favorite tavern. Mothers in the area raised

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a storm of protest that echoed through City Hall and turned politicians' hair gray. The furor served in addition a useful public purpose; it lifted the lid on some of Moses's weird financial arrangements with the concessionaires. It was discovered that his Park Department contract with the Tavern proprietors called for them to pay the city 5.4 per cent on their gross, but that in actual operation they had paid only 1.6 per cent on a take of $5,866,861 for the years from 1948 through 1954. Moses, with lordly generosity, had permitted the tavern to deduct from the city's share the costs of some extremely lavish improvements—items like $248,000 for an addition to the kitchen; $48,300 for a new corridor; $65,100 for alterations to the cocktail lounge. How much padding there was, if any, in these seemingly extravagant bills is the untold part of the story; for Moses, faced with a court test, abruptly backed down and surrendered unconditionally to irate motherhood, a rare and perhaps significant retreat on his part.

On a vaster and more glaring scale were the repeated blunders of Moses in the administration of the Title I slum clearance program. This is in any event a government-financed bonanza for private enterprise. On the theory that private capital needed encouragement to invest in slum clearance, Congress passed the Title I clause to the Housing Act of 1949. Under the plan municipalities would condemn slum areas; residents would be relocated and existing run-down buildings razed. Then the land would be turned over to private developers at a low price estimated to represent its worth in its barren estate. The loss sustained by tearing down existing structures would be borne by the taxpayers, two-thirds by the federal government, one-third by the city.

Throughout most of the nation, municipalities condemned the land, moved off the people and razed the buildings before turning the sites over to private developers who then had no choice except to build as quickly as possible. But Moses insisted that the system that had worked elsewhere wouldn't work in New York. Instead, he turned entire tenement areas over to private developers at knock-down prices, with buildings still standing, fully populated, producing hundreds of thousands of dollars in rents. The result was inevitable: the temptation to milk the slum dwellers for as long as possible before tearing down the tenements and rebuilding, proved irresistible. In one case, insiders skimmed off $649,215 in fancy fees, salaries and "expenses" in 18 months without even making a gesture toward demolition.

In another Moses project, some fine and sound residential buildings were ruthlessly destroyed to make way for costly luxury apartments, crowned with penthouses renting for as much as $8,000 a year. Contractors who had been tarred in FHA windfall scandals and had had to refund hundreds of thousands of dollars to the federal government, received the blessing of Moses, and became sponsors of new, tax-subsidized housing in his Title I developments. In at least one major project, one of the largest and most experienced area redevelopment firms in the nation was frozen out and the contract awarded to a group that repre-

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sented nothing but a paper corporation—an outfit that then proceeded to carve up some $2 million in rent receipts, milking its project, building nothing, finally moving out with its boodle and leaving the job to someone else.

THE CATALOGUE goes on and on. One project furnished a graphic example of how one Moses hand washes the other. When Moses's Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority opened the Triborough Bridge in July, 1936, it was understood that tolls would cease, or at least be drastically cut, when the span was paid for. It had been erected at comparatively small cost to the city with the aid of a $44 million PWA loan. Since that time Triborough has paid for itself many times over. In its first twenty years it gobbled up more than $100 million in tolls from the traveling public; but it still exacts its tariff, piling up a financial reservoir to bankroll other Moses enterprises. This cash reserve of millions was tapped by Moses when he decided to have his Triborough Authority sponsor his Coliseum under the aegis of Title I. Some years before, Moses had needled the rival Port Authority for expansionist tendencies, saying that if it had excess revenues it ought to cut its tolls; reminded of this remark when Triborough sponsored his Coliseum, he shrugged his shoulders and said he'd changed his mind.

When the Coliseum was completed, one of New York's largest banks, which previously had had a branch on the site, didn't re-establish itself in the massive new structure. Instead, the banking concession went to the Federation Bank and Trust Company, whose President was Thomas J. Shanahan, Moses's vice chairman on the Slum Clearance Committee, and one of whose directors was George E. Spargo, secretary and general manager at $40,000 a year of Moses's Triborough Authority. A neater parlay of public power and private interest would be difficult to envision.

Occasionally, such high-handed Moses antics stir up a call for a look at the ledgers of his Authorities. These are as zealously guarded by the master as are the most secret files of the FBI by J. Edgar Hoover. One of the most serious threats in recent years was posed by the State Little Hoover Commission, headed by Senator William S. Hults. Hults urged the Legislature to require Public Authorities to report annually on their operations and finances; to supply the state with budgetary information; to give data on rates, revenues, sources of revenues and *contracts;* and to submit to an audit of their accounts by the State Comptroller once every five years. Not unreasonably, it would seem, Hults argued: "Autonomy does not connote secrecy. If anything, the more autonomous the public agency the more its operations and finances should be an open book."

Such logic has no place in the Moses scheme of things. The great man responded with a roar of outrage. No open books for him. He branded the Hults report "petty criticism and petty disparagement, followed by correction of *non-existent* evils. . . . The Senator either has deep-rooted prejudice against public authorities generally or a personal

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grudge against some of the men who run them so successfully [meaning of course himself]." Under the Moses lash, the Hults report was buried in the legislative files. And Moses continued on his free-wheeling way, with a result that this year left even his arch supporter, Governor Rockefeller, admittedly "aghast."

THE GOVERNOR'S SHOCK was registered after *The New York Post* disclosed that Moses had actually sold a public street to private interests without consulting anybody about it. The "street" in question serves as an exit roadway carrying northbound traffic from the Queens-Midtown Tunnel. A private developer wanted to put up a tall new office-building tower on adjacent land, but he didn't own enough property to meet zoning restrictions, prescribing the size of the base area that must be left around the bottom of such a sructure. In his trouble, the developer applied to Moses's Triborough Authority for help, and Triborough sold him the north-bound exit road for $115,000. The land originally had been condemned by the city in 1938 for $158,525 and turned over to Triborough; but, though actually a street, it wasn't registered as such on city maps since it was under Triborough's jurisdiction. Hence it was technically legal for Triborough to sell it, with the understanding that the traveling public could continue to use it as a tunnel exit. The sale enabled the private developer to get around the zoning laws and build his tower—a construction chore that happened to go to the company that had just hired Olds, Moses's son-in-law.

Having uncovered this luscious tid-bit in Triborough's manipulations, *The New York Post* not unnaturally sought to discover what else might be hidden in the secret archives. It asked Moses to let it look; he turned it down, with a none-of-your-damned-business vehemence. The *Post* took its case to court, contending that the records of Public Authorities should be public documents; but it lost. The State Supreme Court ruled that Triborough was within its rights to keep its records closed. Authorities, said the court, are legal entities separate and apart from the state which creates them and the cities and counties they serve. In other words, the servant is a law unto itself and has literally become the master of his creators.

This perhaps is the genuine, crowning achievement of Robert Moses. He has created and successfully defended within the fabric of American democracy an island of unbreachable, untouchable despotism. At the same time he remains the paragon without rival, an exemplar of vision and efficiency within the framework of democracy; a colossus untarnished, unsullied, inimitable in his indispensability and perfection. It is no mean achievement.

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MARGINAL INDUSTRIES, LOW WAGES, AND HIGH RISKS

Gus Tyler

In 1956 about two out of every three Americans lived in a metropolitan area. The greatest growth since 1950, however, was not in the central cities themselves, but in the surrounding country. Fully half of the increase occurred in territory listed as *rural* in the 1950 census; by 1960 many of these newly developed suburban areas were officially classified as *urban*. The rural population of America, then, has once again shrunk, both absolutely and also relative to urban population. And the percentage of people living in those great agglomerations known as metropolitan areas has increased, thanks primarily to the urbanization of the suburbs. In some parts of the country—notably in that great swath running from Alexandria, Virginia, to Portland, Maine—metropolitan areas are gradually fusing into a great super-metropolis, a megalopolis.

These population shifts produce profound changes in living habits, culture, economy, and politics—changes so rapid and radical that unless they are anticipated they can overwhelm the civilization from which they spring. The special character of metropolitan problems lies in their complexity, their inextricable intertwining. The special response of our society must take the form of *planning,* partly localized and voluntary but mainly over-all and governmental. To foresee and provide for the coming crisis, it is desirable that we have some insight into the inner dynamics of the metropolis. The ten volumes of the New York Metropolitan Region Study undertake to provide such insight—and to suggest the nature of the city's future. *Made in New York,** the second volume of this series, places three metropolitan industries under the microscope: garments, printing-publishing, and electronics.

These three were chosen because they have a heavy specific gravity in the area (28 per cent of the manufacturing employees of the region); because they produce for national consumption and are therefore not tied to the city by force of a limited market; because they have been shifting industries locationally both within the region and between the region and the rest of the nation. *Made in New York* discusses these three highly mobile industries in an attempt to answer one major question:

* *Made in New York*: Case Studies in Metropolitan Manufacturing, by Roy B. Helfgott, W. Eric Gustafson, James M. Hund. Edited by Max Hall. Harvard University Press. 388 pages.

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Why, in each, do certain products and certain stages of production gravitate into the metropolitan region?

I

Although the essays examine three separate industries they all come to the same conclusion as to what in the New York climate attracts certain products and operations. If you view manufacture as part art and part muscle, part inspiration and part perspiration, part invention and part repetition, part diversity and part uniformity, then those portions of manufacture that are arty, inspirational, inventive and diverse, tend to seek out and stick to New York. And those portions that are muscular, sweaty, repetitious and uniform, tend to locate outside the Metropolitan Region. Put differently, the unstandardized products and operations are city dwellers; the standardized work seeks the wider open spaces.

In a summary statement of findings, Max Hall, editor of the volume, states this central thesis:

> In all three, the activities which took most readily to the Region tended to be activities resulting in products whose characteristics could not be accurately anticipated—products, that is, which were unstandardized. . . . The making of [such] products required materials and labor and services that were not easily determined in advance. . . . Dresses subject to style changes, for example, have changing inputs of design, fabrics, dyes, tailorwork, buttons and finishing touches. . . . Uncertainty over the product and the inputs causes a manufacturing establishment to need flexibility. Uncertainty over the *volume* of output has a similar effect. Establishments for which uncertainty is a normal part of life cannot generally achieve a high degree of self-sufficiency. Rubbing elbows with others of their kind and with ancillary firms that exist to serve them, they can satisfy their variable wants by drawing upon common pools of space-labor, materials and services. In more concise language, they can take advantage of *external* economies.

While the New York Region offers "external" economies of this sort, the argument goes, the region outside the Metropolis offers certain "internal" economies—one of which is cheaper labor.

This thesis contains a large grain of truth. A *schmooes* at lunch time on the corner of 7th Avenue and 38th Street is as vital to a cloak and suiter as a Madison Avenue address to an ad agency. Styles to steal are as vital to the dress house as voluminous photo agencies to the huckster. Talent and taste, brains and brass, services and servicemen, gossip and gospel, museums and libraries and schools, speed and spark and specialists are at the core of these industries. These compose the external economies, the big come-ons for New York.

But the argument of *Made in New York* is *not* the whole truth. New York has "internal" economies to offer: space and—sadly—cheap labor. This tawdry aspect of the New York economy is somewhat obscured by the book's emphasis on the city as a high-wage center. Actually, it ranks 19th among America's cities in terms of wages. Alongside the men of

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talent and taste, the hucksters and the artists, there is in the metropolitan area a great reservoir of low-paid, unskilled laborers—and for this there are many reasons.

First, New York is still a port of entry for migrants and immigrants. The greatest waves in recent decades have been the Negro and Puerto Rican. While few of these have found their way into the skilled trades of printing and publishing, great hordes have come to garment manufacture and electronics. Thousands have turned to the service trades, culinary trades, hotels, hospitals, etc. And, like all other newcomers, they compose a low-wage group until such time as they learn skills, the language, and the cultural ropes.

Second, these newcomers tend to settle in ghettoes—by choice or necessity—and to create pockets of cheap labor. Light industry entrepreneurs (and New York City manufacture is predominantly light industry) tend to set up shop in the midst of or within walking distance of these newcomer communities. They reach out for unskilled, often female, labor—offering a special inducement in the form of proximity, late arrival, early departure, and minimal penalties for days off when family life becomes demanding. In exchange, these women work for sub-standard wages.

Third, these light industries producing easily transportable commodities face national—and international—competition. Low wages are paralleled by narrow profit margins, high seasonality, recurrent bankruptcies. These industries are marginal, living on marginal populations, constantly threatened by the even more marginal sectors of the same trade living in even more marginal cultures. The marginal and savagely competitive character of these trades places self-executing limits on union contracts. A high-wage contract, strictly enforced, sometimes means automatic bankruptcy.

Fourth, New York City is not a center of basic industry in which wage levels are relatively high even for unskilled and semi-skilled labor. Hence, these industries do not offer competition in New York for the available labor supply. In basic industries, wages tend to be higher for three reasons: a) management can establish "administered" prices; b) the labor factor is relatively small as part of total cost because operations tend to be highly mechanized and automated; c) the plant cannot duck and dodge and disappear and reappear to play an endless game of cat and mouse with union organizers. In a city such as Cleveland, with its huge heavy industry plants, light industry of a highly competitive character with a high labor ingredient in its ultimate cost finds it almost impossible to flourish.

II

The problem of the *marginal* worker arises in no small part from the fact that his marginal industry exists in an economy alongside of oligopolies. These latter can administer prices; the former cannot. The latter can guarantee or enlarge their share of the consumer dollar; the former cannot. The latter can afford higher wages because the basic cost

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is in equipment, plant and materials rather than in labor; the former cannot afford the same high wages because the profit margin is close, because labor is often a major cost factor, and because the end product is in fierce national and international competition. Finally, the basic industry, highly automated with its uniformity of product, can rapidly increase its productivity year after year, while the smaller industries are often compelled to operate for decades under a compromised economy precisely because they turn out small lots of diversified goods.

Just as small industry must lose out to oligopoly in the struggle for the market so, too, must the worker in the competitive, mobile, low-profit trades lose his standing relative to the worker in the mechanized, immobile, high-profit industries. An understanding of the differing positions of competitive and non-competitive industries, of non-automated and automated industries in our economy, explains the curious wage paradox of New York: *a high-wage city that ranks nineteenth among cities in the nation.*

In a given industry, such as dresses, coats, toys, novelties, dolls, plastics, the New York wage generally tops the national wage, thanks to the work of unions in these nationally competitive, traditionally sweatshop trades. But the vast number of service trades in New York lower the wage level first because these sectors of the economy generally lag behind manufacturing and secondly, because a sizable portion of income in these trades consists of tips and meals rather than wages. Even where the New York wage in services tops other parts of the country, again because of unionization, the high proportion of workers in such trades in the metropolitan region tends to depress the city average.

Thus New York represents a high-wage sector of certain national industries and trades, but because of the metropolitan "mix," the relatively light sprinkling of heavy, automated, non-competitive industry, New York appears to rank low. This explains the continuing debate as to whether the metropolis is a high-wage or a low-wage area. The answer is that New York is both—the high-wage *end* of *low-wage industries and trades.*

III

In most discussions of wages in America, only the average earnings of workers are considered. A more realistic approach, however, must differentiate between the wages of workers in mechanized monopoly industries and in wage-oriented competitive industries. It is the workers in these latter industries who pose the problem of indigence even in the midst of an "affluent society" and who make up a major part of that one-fifth of the nation that is still ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed.

A primary step in relieving the oppressive poverty of this one-fifth of the nation (not confined to the South but all too present in the streets of our greatest metropolis) is to raise the Federal minimum wage and to extend its coverage to the millions of workers who are not included under the present provisions. A national statute would establish a firm base on which to erect a higher wage in areas that offer "external econ-

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omies" to the manufacturer. Unions could then negotiate more rewarding contracts because the wage differential between union and non-union areas would be offset by the advantages of the metropolitan climate.

A second step is to encourage rather than discourage unionization outside the already well organized areas like New York. Federal (or state) legislation or court actions which hinder union organizing efforts in the generally unorganized sectors of the nation not only keep wage levels low in these sectors but depress wage levels nationally. Lack of unionization in Mississippi or Georgia directly affects earnings in Brooklyn and the Bronx. Actually, the South is merely the most militant and effective spokesman for a "rural" point of view that acts as a nineteenth-century drag on a twentieth-century civilization, as an agrarian weight around the neck of the metropolis.

A third step is to use governmental power to tax the more affluent sector of the society to care for the needs of the less affluent. The 25 per cent profit return on original investment not uncommon in steel and autos as contrasted with the one per cent profit in garments does not derive from an inherent virtue of metal over fabrics, but from the monopoly character of the former and the competitive character of the latter. The workers in the latter industries suffer although many of them possess skills as great or even greater than those required in the basic industries. If the products created by low-paid workers are vital to our society—such commodities, for example, as food, fibres, wood, tubes, bulbs, transistors, dresses, overalls, shoes, gloves, and diapers—then society has no right to victimize these workers because their industries are competitive and defy automation.

While part of this redistribution of wealth can be accomplished locally or regionally—through local minimum wage laws, housing, medical services—the ultimate solution must be national, because the root of the problem is not local but national.

Made in New York directs our attention to the millions upon millions of workers who earn their livelihood in the usually undiscussed segments of the economy. So much wordage goes toward discussion of steel, auto, coal and chemicals—the giants of our economy—that the public often forgets that these are not the major employers in America. Twenty-five per cent of the workers in the United States are in manufacturing establishments employing less than 100 workers and a majority in establishments with less than 500. These are the forgotten men, a good many of them in New York City, of our allegedly affluent society.

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"COMMUNITAS"—ITS IMPACT ON CITY PLANNING

Herbert J. Gans

I

The city planner's approach to the improvement of society differs sharply from that of the intellectual. The planner seeks improvement by manipulating spatial relationships, that is, through the coordination of the natural environment, space, and man-made land uses such as buildings, neighborhoods and highways. Except for a quite recent concern with the economic base, the planner has paid little attention to the social structure or economy of the city. In essence, he believes that the well-planned and esthetically pleasing community will assure a good life for its citizens.

For some time now, this approach—called physical planning in the professional jargon—has been under attack from various quarters. During the 1950s it became increasingly clear that the old and new ailments of the city could not be healed by such physical solutions as project planning, zoning, master planning and urban renewal. Projects such as New York's Lincoln Square and Philadelphia's Penn Center are still being proposed and built, but it is doubtful that they can revitalize downtown or stem the flow of middle-class residents out of the city. Progress is being made with zoning ordinances and master plans, but so far, neither the new concepts drafted by the planners nor the watered-down versions that are finally adopted have solved downtown congestion or halted the spread of slums. Urban renewal has resulted primarily in subsidized luxury housing, and the transfer of slum dwellers from one blighted area to another.

As a result, there is a growing recognition that the problems of the city are economic, social and political; that rearranging land uses and replacing buildings does not solve these; and that the solutions must be economic, social and political. This new awareness has been stimulated by the entry of social scientists into city planning, and by the critical comments of other intellectuals, especially those who see that their way of life, which is dependent on the city, is being threatened by the continued expansion of the slums, the destruction of the traditional urban texture by large-scale renewal projects, and by the departure of their middle-class audience to the suburbs.

The outcome of these tendencies has been the gradual development of a new approach to city planning, which rejects the idea of social betterment through physical re-arrangements alone. This approach, which

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I call goal-oriented, determines the public and private goals of the community, ranks them in priority, and finds the best means for their achievement from among all available resources, human as well as physical.

II

The reissue of Percival and Paul Goodman's *Communitas** could not have come at a more opportune moment. The book provides planning with one formulation of the new approach, albeit a more radical and visionary one than that currently favored by planners in some universities and local agencies. Written by an architect and a novelist-poet-critic, *Communitas* is both a critique of contemporary planning and an exciting revival of utopian thinking.

The Goodmans treat planning as both a rational process and a form of social creativity. Their methodology is simple: begin with explicit goals, and then search for the most sensible and creative means to achieve them. The goals to be sought are societal in scope; they are part of a total vision of a better society. They argue that America today possesses "a technology of choice and an economy of abundance" which permits us to control our destiny. Consequently, planning ought to begin with "means of livelihood and ways of life." Physical plans and architectural solutions are one of the instruments for achieving societal goals (as well as for expressing them symbolically), and act as the bridge between the man-made and natural environment.

Although this approach may seem self-evident to the socialist, it turns traditional city planning on its head. The Goodmans seek explicit goals, instead of applying time-honored "solutions" or quantitative "standards"; and they place physical planning towards the end, rather than the beginning of the planning process. The Goodmans' description of the difference is best illustrated by their manifesto on neo-functionalism. Where traditional planners have emphasized the relation between form and function, the Goodmans argue that the significant variable is the function itself:

> Form follows function, but let us subject the function itself to a formal critique. Is the function good? . . . Is it worthwhile? . . . Is it worthy of man to do that? , . . Is it compatible with other, basic, human functions? . . . Is it a forthright or at least ingenious part of life? . . . We have grown unused to asking such ethical questions of our streets, our cars, our towns. But nothing less will give us an esthetics for community planning, the proportioning of means and ends. . . . For a community is not a construction, a bold Utopian model; its chief part is always people. . . .

But a new approach is not enough. While the Goodmans say that "at present, any plan will win our praise so long as it is really functional according to the criterion we have proposed: so long as it is aware of means and ends," they add the qualification, "and is not as a way of life absurd." They see, however, many absurdities in contemporary America,

* Vintage Books, N. Y., 1960, 248 pp. $1.25.

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and in the planning schemes put forward in the past. They argue that we have allowed our industrial organization to develop a degree of centralization and gigantism which is neither desirable nor necessary. As a result, work is no longer attractive or meaningful, and becomes mere production. The workers' frustration is assuaged by a senseless and unrewarding consumption of goods but the processes continue in order to keep the economic system in operation. ". . . When the system depends on all the machines running, unless every kind of goods is produced and sold it is also impossible to produce bread. Then an economy is out of human scale." The workers pile themselves into cities and suburbs that are ugly, inefficient, isolated from the countryside, and lacking the amenities and the sense of community that would make them fit the human scale.

THE GOODMANS then examine some of the "grand schemes" which planners have proposed as alternatives and find most of these wanting. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City plan, parts of which have influenced much contemporary suburban planning, decentralizes work and residence, but does nothing to reconstruct the nature of work or to give it a meaningful role in the community. Corbusier's Ville Radieuse, the scheme for a city of skyscrapers which in watered down form may be seen in many urban renewal projects, has the same failing. The skyscrapers create open space, order, and efficiency of movement, but Corbusier's lack of interest in livelihood and life leads to a community which is likely to become a prison for its residents. The Goodmans criticize industrial community plans for their lack of attention to community life, and so-called integrated plans, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City, for their rural nostalgia and failure to make use of the potentialities of modern technology. They have kind words only for some of the intentional communities, e.g., the kibbutzim, which have achieved an integration of work and community, city and country, modern technology and human scale, and which "even in failure irradiate society with people who have been profoundly touched by the excitement of life. . ."

The Goodmans then present three planning schemes of their own to illustrate the wide range of social arrangements that could be planned for. The first is for a "city of efficient consumption" which is geared to achieve what they see as the American goal of producing sufficient waste to keep the economic system in operation. The center of this city is a huge department store, in which shops are transformed into giant counters and streets become corridors between them. The ancillary institutions of the community exist only to spur buying, and the residents live in neighborhoods which encourage conspicuous consumption through a discreet mixing of income levels. Once a year, the city fathers stage a carnival in which the everyday consumption level is brought to a climax through a potlatch-like orgy. This automatically clears the shelves for inventory, frees the residents from ennui, and prepares buyers and sellers alike for another year of systematic con-

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sumption. The Goodmans suggest that they are describing New York in the 1960's, although their satire resembles that city less than the suburban subdivisions built around giant shopping centers, as well as some recent proposals for central business district renewal.

The other two models are based on positive goals. The second, the Goodmans' own favorite, attempts to create a community in which work is restored to human scale, and integrated with the rest of life. The Goodmans argue that modern technology makes it possible to decentralize production, and to locate it in small factories and even home workshops. The workers thus have actual and direct control over their labor and product. The time clock is abolished; everyone has time off for study, and at least one free month a year. Industrial workers help out on the farms in peak season, and the farmers work in factories in the winter. This makes for rotation between different kinds of work, and a meaningful relationship between town and country. Each small community and its hinterland is part of a large industrial region which in turn competes and cooperates with others in a federal system.

The community itself contains some features of the medieval guild system and the Greek polis. Residences, workplaces, shops, artists' studios and other institutions front on piazzas, modern forms of the closed squares which can still be found in the oldest sections of European towns. Many of the residents' non-work hours are spent in the piazza, in social relationships, civic activities, at the open-air art exhibits which have replaced museums, and in an adult form of the casual "hanging out" behavior for which only teenagers find time in our era. Work, leisure, art, and community are as one.

The final model is based on the assumption that modern industrial organization and productivity make it possible to eliminate work as the central occupation and grinding routine of life. In this scheme, the government organizes the subsistence economy, since it can provide food, clothing, shelter and other necessities more cheaply and efficiently than private enterprise. The citizens are conscripted into these industries for a part—the Goodmans estimate a tenth—of their lives, doing work which is not necessarily pleasant, but which is accepted because it is brief, and assures their subsistence for the rest of their lives. The remaining time is their own in a society geared to minimum regulation and maximum choice. People are free to work further to obtain luxury goods, or to spend their time in travel, study, the pursuit of avocations, or even small-scale entrepreneurial activity, "for the risks of the fundamental insecurity of life having been removed, why should not one work to amass a little capital and then risk it in an enterprise that was always sneakingly attractive?"

The subsistence factories are located in decentralized industrial communities; the workers live in efficient subsistence-level housing. In their free time, people can choose alternative arrangements. Those who wish to travel can get mobile homes, while those who want urban conveniences and amenities are free to settle in the city, and can work to pay the costs of urban living.

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III

Communitas is a sermon on the future of planning, preached with fervor, but with considerable awareness of the obstacles to salvation. The Goodmans write (and draw) with a mixture of passionate attachment and gentle irony; there is none of the pompousness and dogmatism that so often impairs the "grand schemes" of the past. The three community paradigms are not only illustrations of the Goodmans' approach to planning, but also utopian visions of society.

Intellectuals have traditionally written utopias to depict societies in which their goals and values have the priority not granted them in the real world. From the point of view of planning, this is a shortcoming, for such utopias tend to neglect the values of the rest of the population, and are thus culture-bound visions of the future.

The Goodmans' three schemes share this limitation. The anti-utopian city of efficient consumption reflects the intellectual's narrow concept of consumption as either an end-in-itself or a status-seeking device, and overestimates the importance of consumption in people's lives. There are, to be sure, women who shop to consume, or to overcome feelings of boredom and uselessness, and there are conspicuous consumers, especially among adolescents and in the upper middle class. But for most people shopping is a less significant and certainly less Dionysian act than the Goodmans imply, and the things they buy are for the most part sensible aids to the pursuit of family life and leisure.

Their second scheme expresses the intellectual's own dedication to work and craftsmanship. The polis of craftsmen which the Goodmans describe in loving terms is a community of intellectuals in blue collars, where there is no place for the kind of white collar and service occupations intellectuals consider parasitic. Elements like the intense social integration, the priority of community life over home life, and a universal dedication to the common good have attracted intellectuals to this type of community from time immemorial.

Their third scheme, however, is geared to an opposite yet related intellectual dream: to escape from society and its routine. The community of minimum regulation makes it possible to discharge social responsibilities quickly and painlessly, so that one can spend the rest of one's life in study, contemplation or travel.

THE INTELLECTUAL "bias" of the schemes does not detract from their usefulness for utopian thinking. However, the Goodmans do not write only as utopians; they do not wish to be dismissed as dreamers. In fact, they argue that their seemingly impractical proposals are in the long run more practical than those which are called practical today yet lead to dire consequences in the future. This claim may be valid, but it would have been more persuasive if the Goodmans had discussed how their schemes could be adopted and implemented by contemporary planners. Admittedly, this is no easy task.

It would be intellectual gamesmanship to suggest that visionary schemes ought to incorporate the positive elements of the status quo,

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for this would probably inhibit the urge to innovate. Nevertheless, the impact of the Goodmans' schemes on future planning is limited by their failure to consider two problems: to what extent current work, leisure, family life and residential arrangements coincide with the values of the non-intellectual strata, and to what extent these arrangements—or functional alternatives for them—must be included in the schemes. This shortcoming follows from the Goodmans' critique of American society, which frequently falls into the trap that unites conservatism and socialism; a lack of empathy for the ways of life and preferences of the working class and the lower middle class.

Like all innovators, the Goodmans tend to assume that there are no value differences between themselves and the populations for which they are planning, and that current differences of behavior would be abandoned in behalf of their schemes if people had the opportunity to make choices. There is no real evidence for this assumption, as social scientists are quick to point out when they analyze planning schemes. However, the social scientists' skepticism is in part a result of the fact that their research has dealt mainly with current behavior, and not with how people perceive and make choices between alternatives. Thus, the innovator can say with some justification that his central assumption cannot be rejected a priori.

Debates between innovators and empiricists must remain inconclusive, since it is impossible to predict the results of untried innovation. The only real test of the Goodmans' schemes is to try them out. The Goodmans suggest this, and propose that the second and third schemes be tested in underdeveloped nations. They argue persuasively that the third scheme might in fact allow these nations to develop their own urban-industrial culture, and thus prevent the miseries inherent in copying Western institutions. The second scheme, which lends itself to a local or regional experiment, could be tried out in one of the many suburban subdivisions-with-industry which will probably be typical of communities to be built in the next American housing boom.

Unfortunately, opportunities for experimentation are infrequent and when they occur, the innovator must usually be able to guarantee his sponsors a reasonable chance of success. Moreover, people are inherently conservative, particularly when confronted by plans requiring behavior change. (The Goodmans recognize this, and unlike most innovators, do so sympathetically.) New schemes of living which involve not only behavior changes but also the acceptance of intellectuals' values are likely to arouse little sympathy. Therefore, it is especially important that such schemes respect the goals of the people for whom they are intended, and do so better than their present communities and institutions.

Consequently, another step must be added to the Goodmans' approach: an analysis of each scheme from the perspective of those who will live in it, and perhaps some revisions to make sure that the scheme will satisfy them, as well as the innovator. This added step should help

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to make the experiment more successful than past utopian communities.

The day when planners will go about their job in this way is probably far off, although the time may be ripe for a consideration of that phase of the Goodmans' approach which they describe as the awareness and proportioning of means and ends. The application of that approach will undoubtedly be less radical than the Goodmans intend, The virtue of *Communitas* is that it can serve as a model for mundane planning, yet hold up to constant view a visionary approach. Hopefully, planners who must attend to the former because of necessity will not ignore the latter. There may come a day when alternative outlets must be found for the billions now spent on defense, and it would be good to have a few plans ready, just in case.

The DISSENT Art Show

Esthetically and financially a success, an ART EXHIBITION AND SALE for the benefit of DISSENT was held in an attractive hall in New York City on May 6 & 7 under the direction of William Fitelson. The editors of DISSENT wish to take this occasion to give their sincerest thanks to the ART COMMITTEE 1961 which organized the show (by all accounts one of the best in the City this season): William Fitelson, Thomas B. Hess, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Larry Rivers, Harold Rosenberg, and Meyer Schapiro; and the forty-one contributing artists:

Gert Berliner
Norman Bluhm
Gandy Brodie
Paul Burlin
Dorothy Dehner
Dorothy Eisner
Herbert Ferber
John Ferren
Perle Fine
Jane Freilicher
Robert Goodnough
Adolph Gottlieb
Grace Hartigan
Peter Kahn
Wolf Kahn
Aristodemos Kaldis
Franz Kline
Elaine de Kooning
Willem de Kooning
Irving Kriesberg
Fay Lansner
Alfred Leslie
Isaac Lichtenstein
Palko Lucas
Robert Mallary
Nicholas Marsicano
Mercedes Matter
Robert Motherwell
Barnett Newman
Constantino Nivola
Robert Orlove
Felix Pasilis
Patricia Passlof
Jeanne Reynal
Larry Rivers
Jason Seley
Thomas Sills
Leon Smith
Hyde Solomon
Richard Stankiewicz
Adja Yunkers

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LINCOLN CENTER, EMPORIUM OF THE ARTS*

Percival Goodman

"Lincoln Center will be great theatre, great music—and great fun."—(Ad in N. Y. *Times*, January 11, 1960)

John D. Rockefeller III, President of the Lincoln Center of Performing Arts, says, "Lincoln Center is a story in the American tradition of voluntary private initiative and of what it means in service to the public. . . . It can be one means of helping to meet a paramount need of our time: the need of modern man for creative fulfillment—his striving for self-expression and the emotional and aesthetic satisfactions that set him above the animal . . . The task ahead [raising money] can be accomplished only with the interest, understanding and cooperation of all the segments of our society who have a stake in Lincoln Center—Government, business, labor, philanthropy and above all, the individual American citizen."

The President of the United States, at the ground-breaking ceremony, said of Lincoln Center, "Here will develop a mighty influence for Peace and Understanding."**

It is curious that, in the face of such inspiring statements, the building of this huge civic project has not aroused an enthusiastic response on the part of the citizenry. Even enlightened people are strangely apathetic. Indeed, despite the fact that individual American citizens are making a substantial money contribution to Lincoln Center, there is a general belief that the project is a private enterprise like Woolworth's or the A & P.

Perhaps Lincoln Center is an idea that average people cannot grasp: it is too big and new; only minds that have been molded by great organizations can appreciate works of this sort. And perhaps intellectuals cannot appreciate the simple principle that if one thing is good, then ten of them is ten times as good. Furthermore, it is apparently necessary to explain the essential correctness of using public funds without consulting the public or their elected representatives—even

*I owe this title to Jacques Barzun (*Columbia University Forum*, Winter 1960).

**(This article was written about a year ago. Some things have changed—the General is no longer the President of our country, the Park Commissioner is no longer Park Commissioner nor is he Slum Clearance Chairman, yet just as influential withal. As head of the World's Fair 1964 he has convinced the city fathers that Lincoln Center is part of the Fair and so gotten the Center a substantial money gift by this feat. The architects' plans have been "finalized." The Philharmonic Building stands roughed out on its site and it, as well as a building for Fordham, blend perfectly into the existing street scene of automobile showrooms and old hotels. In spite of the fact that a professional survey showed "as many people know about Lincoln Center as know about the pyramids," money is still short and citizens still inert.)

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when it is for a project obviously in the public interest. My purpose in writing this article, then, is to help towards a better understanding of Lincoln Center.

LET US FIRST CONSIDER how the conception of Lincoln Center arose. The Metropolitan Opera and the Philharmonic wanted new buildings. Their difficulty was in finding land that they could afford, raising funds, etc. Juilliard needed a new campus; Fordham University wanted a downtown branch. No one could deny that a repertory theater was desirable in principle. No one would be so philistine as to question the importance of a dance theater. By lumping all the performing groups together, adding Fordham University and certain special housing, a project big enough for a proper public-relations approach was conceived. The directors of this promotion are distinguished men: the old salt. They include a vice-president of Abraham & Straus, a director of Union Carbide, the former president of General Foods, the president of Steuben Glass, the chairman of Cuban-American Sugar, the rector of Fordham University, a former chairman of U.S. Steel, and John D. Rockefeller III. These men have had the vision to foster the arts by geographical concentration.

Robert Moses, in his capacity as Chairman of the Slum Clearance Committee, had the *modus operandi*. He had already shown that if the sponsor of a project was personally acceptable, he could construe the rather loose wording of Title I of the Urban Renewal Law to suit the sponsor's purpose. The Urban Renewal Law itself was enacted to tear down slums and build housing at rents people could afford to pay; briefly stated, slums were to be bought and sold to private developers at marked-down prices. Mr. Moses had brilliantly interpreted this law to allow the building of such a monument as the Coliseum Exhibition Hall and Office Building, whose architecture forms an ideal background for the National Hardware Show and similar spectacles.

The path to Lincoln Center was therefore clear: its sponsorship was of the best and it presented an extraordinary opportunity for civic improvement and "long-term investment at modest profit." Not only could there be a substantial contribution through the Title I land grant, but "grants-in-aid" could be secured for such appurtenances as plazas and parking garages. Not least important, other contributions would be tax-exempt. There would be a partnership between an organization trained in big enterprise which would make the decisions and spend the money, and the public, the ideal partner, not only silent but unaware. Finally, the biggest contribution might well turn out to be the perpetual tax-exemption of fourteen acres of prime, improved property: a notable gesture towards the better life by a city government plagued by financial difficulties.

WHY, THEN, have most New Yorkers been so apathetic to this project? By way of an answer, let us discuss the development of Lincoln Center.

First, the City Planning aspects of the project. Section 197 of The New York City Charter instructed the City Planning Commission to prepare a master plan. In 1940, the City Planning Commission stated, "A Master Plan can only be conceived and developed by first striving for the most comprehensive view and clearest understanding of a Master Plan by the

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citizens . . . It can be as good and effective as they make it." The fact that in the last twenty years there has been no master plan simply demonstrates that our people will not be coerced: New Yorkers believe in laissez faire and the planning of Lincoln Center is the proof.

In the site planning, the architects (of whom we shall speak later) turned for advice to other, less well-organized men, notably Alvar Aalto of Finland and Sven Markelius of Sweden. Yet, as it turned out, it was neither an American architect nor these foreign authorities who made the crucial site-planning decision—it was Robert Moses himself. Mr. Moses, in his capacity as Park Commissioner, decided that there had been enough shilly-shallying. "The park," he said, and pointed with his pencil, "will be there."

The Center has the charm, then, of being located by architectural hazard—not, of course, economic hazard —a method planners call "spot development" (an American invention). The architects, at one period in the designing, seem to have felt that this was a fault, for they proposed an enclosing arcade, to create as they said, its own environment. Fortunately, this idea was discarded because of the expense.

It is true that the streets around Lincoln Center will be congested; the surrounding streets and avenues cannot be redesigned to handle the traffic. But imagine the excitement of that great crowd of taxis and people converging at curtain time! Some 11,000 people will be fighting to get to their seats at 2:30 or at 8:40. It will be the kind of battle that we all love, a true test of American initiative. Then, cooled in the air-conditioned halls, 11,000 people will relax in comfort and plan the strategy of getting home.

THE PROGRESS REPORT calls some of the contiguous projects "neighbors." These include Fordham, Princess Gardens (420 "middle income" cooperative apartments at $900.00 down plus $30.00 a room), and 4200 "Luxury" apartments sponsored by Webb and Knapp. The new housing at Lincoln Center was perhaps cannily planned to create a convenient audience. The approximately 2000 families displaced by the project were surely not concert-goers.

Fordham University, with 9000 students, will add to the importance of the area. Unlike ew York University, which had to acquire its campus at private developers' prices, block by block and sometimes house by house, Fordham has been given a campus at a bargain price by the government, with an adjacent public park kept up at city expense, and a group of plazas and gathering places kept up by Lincoln Center. That all this is done for a private denominational college, shows the basic concern for education in New York City.

Lincoln Center, as planned, has the benefits of centralization. Here will be found fourteen whole acres of culture, practically under one roof. It is as grand as a suburban shopping center. Contrast this with the old-world city planning idea of dispersing public buildings as points of interest in neutral surroundings. The whole thing would lose its impact. It would not be *big*.

But we must not neglect the buildings and architectural scheme of the Center. For a big job like this you need a top organizer and Wallace Harrison was the inevitable choice. He was the main architect for the UN Complex and the Socony building,

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had been the consulting architect for The Metropolitan Opera Company and is the architect for the new opera house. His partner, Max Abramovitz, was selected by the Philharmonic. The design of the other buildings was entrusted to some of our most prominent architects: Philip Johnson, Pietro Belluschi, Eero Saarinen, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Walker, Foley, Smith & Smith. This is a roster of distinguished men and yet some of our younger architects are disgruntled. They complain that just one hundred years ago, when the Paris Opera construction was started, it was designed by a then unknown architect, Charles Garnier, and that he (under a monarchy) won this job through a public competition. But these youngsters do not realize that instead of employing the wasteful method of public competition used in less organized countries such as Switzerland, Sweden, Israel, and England, we have the largest and busiest firms do the work. Young men who might otherwise be wasting their time competing against each other, instead, collaborate with the efficiency of an auto assembly line. Such a method may not lead to buildings quite so original as those of Le Corbusier, Nervi, or Candela, and our opera house may not have the striking quality of the competition-winning design of the opera in Sydney, Australia. But our buildings will also not have the gross defect of being novel; their designs will be tried and true.

Of course, it is difficult to evaluate what is being done at Lincoln Center. What has been shown publicly is rather sketchy, though the Hugh Ferriss sketches are wonderfully nostalgic of the Chicago 1934 World's Fair. We may rest assured, however, of the caliber of the teams. To indicate the boldness of the Opera House design, let us quote the words of the *Architectural Forum*: "The new exterior design is simpler, less flamboyant . . . The former design had the appearance of a mammoth foot . . . In the new we have a ten story high vaulted arcade . . ." Here, then, is a building bold in scale! (Consider the comparatively small scale of the Doge's Palace in Venice or the Baptistry at Pisa where the arcades are only a single story high.) The stage house will be twenty stories high, to house the elephants of *Aida*, the swan of *Lohengrin*, and the dragon of *Siegfried*. (If only the walls were of glass!)

"In seeking to meet the expanding need for the arts, Lincoln Center is a pioneer," says a Lincoln Center fund-raising brochure. Such men as Mr. Norman Cousins and Mr. Kolodin of *The Saturday Review*, Mr. Paul Henry Lang of *The Herald Tribune*, and a few others, surely are ill-informed in their criticisms of the reduction of seating at the new Philharmonic. The architects and acousticians of Lincoln Center are creating in the Philharmonic Hall "a perfect musical instrument." Critics make statements such as "the needs of the community should dictate the size of the Hall" (*The Herald Tribune*), or, "As for the standees, they are out in the cold . . . perhaps there was something inartistic and untidy about people breathing hard as they crowded around the back and sides of an otherwise majestic auditorium" (*The Saturday Review*). Let LaScala in Milan or the Opera in Paris have their *piccionaia*, their *paradis*, their peanut gallery; the new Philharmonic is dedicated to quality.

These criticisms suggest a certain petty jealousy. For example, Mr. Newbold Morris, when asked why the City

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Center was not included, said, "We were not invited." We grant that the City Center has consistently large audiences, good programs and popular prices, despite the fact that it "plays in a warehouse so ugly and unsatisfactory from every point of view that no self-respecting community one-tenth the size of New York would put up with it" (Paul Henry Lang). But are those audiences of the quality that Lincoln Center is trying to attract? Do those audiences contain "potential givers"?

According to the Lincoln Center Public Relations Office no one will be left out in the cold: "The Buildings are designed to facilitate broadcasting. For every person who attends the performances, thousands will see and hear them in living rooms across the country." In this country even the poorest citizen has his television set, and certainly he is better off at home in a comfortable armchair. Why should he struggle through the subway crush only to suffer the feeling of inferiority common to those who peer dizzily down from the uppermost balcony at the glittering tiers below.

It has been suggested that "what is needed is a larger concert and opera hall with reduced prices." Impresarios like Sol Hurok have even said that the size of the potential audience is 5 per cent of the metropolitan area population of 600,000 people. Such statements, however, reflect nothing more than crass commercialism.

Another critic suggests that it might be better to develop a repertory group of significance before building a special repertory theater, that it is more important to have dancers of artistic merit than a dance theater. Anyone familiar with show business, however, knows that there are plenty of artists and no one would dare to suggest that we do not have great plays. The only shortage lies in jobs.

MOST OF THE OBJECTIONS urged against Lincoln Center have already been answered. But allow me for a moment to be the devil's advocate in order to indicate the absurdity of the arguments against the Center.

1. There is no point in having a center at all. Reason: The buildings have no necessary connection with one another.

2. Gigantism is a disease: fourteen acres stuffed with "culture" is a syndrome.

3. The planning of Lincoln Center is insular: it takes no account of the city plan.

4. Lincoln Center will include the Met, the Philharmonic, a repertory and dance theater, a library, a museum, a bandshell, Fordham and Juilliard: nine buildings or groups which are each potentially interesting. If these buildings were established as focal points in groupings of housing, office buildings, even non-nuisance factories spread through the city, would not the city as a whole be more interesting? Would it not be of advantage to have eight or nine plazas each with its own character, each located to avoid congesting the streets? Would it not, in some cases, bring interest to an otherwise quiet neighborhood, or an evening excitement to a district busy only in the daytime?

5. Supposing each one of these nine projects had designs selected through a public competition. Would the work be less competent than what is being done?

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Aren't the chances good that established architects, under the spur of competition, or perhaps some totally unknown young men, would produce designs of even greater merit?

Our response to such remarks must be sharp. First: every society gets the kind of architecture it deserves, and Lincoln Center when built will be expressive of our moment in history. Second: Lincoln Center must be big, for anything less than a hundred million dollar deal isn't worth the trouble of the great financial and civic leaders who are backing "this great cultural adventure" (to again quote our President). Third: the public idea of "creative fulfillment" *means* the usual great American norm, but more so.

Lincoln Center will be all of these and in addition "great theater, great music and great fun," a tribute to and fulfillment of the American dream.

THE NEW YORK CONFLICT GANG

GANGS draw their members from the immediate area, with the result that they generally represent the ethnic and racial composition of the neighborhood. Thus many gangs in New York City, like the neighborhoods to which they belong, are dominated by a single ethnic or racial group, such as the Negro, Puerto Rican, Irish, or Italian, although it is not uncommon to have some mixing. There have been fights between gangs because of racial and ethnic animosities but differences in racial and ethnic backgrounds generally are not at the heart of gang strife. Rather, such tensions are usually symptoms of underlying maladjustments from which gang fighting is another outgrowth. The arrival of a new ethnic or racial group in an area is often the signal for unrest among the more unruly youth of the older groups. As a result, the boys of the new group are forced to take defensive measures and a cycle of gang warfare is touched off. This proved to be the case in the Lower East Side in 1953, when the movement of Puerto Ricans into the area resulted in gang warfare between them and the established Irish and Italian gangs. The defensive groups may then continue to exist long after the original reason for their formation has been forgotten.

In Manhattan, conflict gangs are to be found on the Lower East Side and in Chelsea, Park West, and Central and East Harlem. In Brooklyn they are active in the Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg, and Red Hook sections and are beginning to form in Brownsville. In the Bronx there are conflict gangs in the Morrisania-Belmont and Mott Haven-Longwood sections; and in Queens they are to be found in Long Island City and Astoria.

Generally, conflict groups are restricted to the neighborhood from which they draw their numbers. There is little inter-borough contact between these gangs except in border areas. When friendship between gangs extends beyond borough lines, often it is because housing redevelopment projects have caused large numbers of families to move, and the boys who join gangs in their new neighborhoods frequently retain ties with their former gang friends. In East Harlem, for example, members of the Dragons whose families have moved to the Bronx have remained members of the Dragons. In isolated instances loose fraternal ties exist between two or more gangs having the same name, like the Sportsmen who are to be found in Central Harlem, in the Bronx, and in Queens. Where one of these groups becomes involved in a rumble, some fraternal gang members frequently extend a helping hand by bringing weapons to be used in the fight.

—From Interim Report No. XIV, Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project of the City of New York.

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THE VILLAGE BEAT SCENE: SUMMER 1960*

Ned Polsky

"Now, it is obviously easier to recognize ideologies wherever they are strongly institutionalized or highly verbal. . . . The true meaning of ideology for identity formation, however, can be fathomed only by descending into those transitory systems of conversion and aversion which exist in . . . adolescence. Such implicit ideologies are often overtly and totally un-ideological; yet they often exist as the most vital part of a young person's or group's life, as a basis for a tentative and yet total orientation in life, without the knowledge or, indeed, curiosity, of the adults around them."—ERIK ERIKSON**

This essay is both more and less than a portrayal of the beats of Greenwich Village and its environs. More, because much of it holds good for beats elsewhere. Less, because I have not depicted some of the Village beat world's well-publicized aspects, but have tried for completeness only in regard to the changes that have taken place in that world since my last acquaintance with it (1957). I use the word "beat" for brevity and ask readers to note that it obscures as much as it illuminates.

I

The individuals in question resent any label whatever, and regard a concern with labelling as basically square. But insofar as they speak of themselves generically and are forced to choose among evils, they prefer the word "beat." Until recently "hipster" meant simply one who is hip, roughly the equivalent of a beat. Beats recognized that the hipster

* For criticism of an earlier draft I am indebted to two members of the beat scene who must remain anonymous, and among the non-beats to John F. Gallagher and Erving Goffman.

In this essay Village commercial establishments frequented by beats appear pseudonymously, except for one bar now defunct.

** "Identity and Totality," in *Human Development Bulletin, Fifth Annual Symposium* (Univ. of Chicago, 1954), p. 68. Erikson omits this passage from later versions of his paper.

A full psychological analysis of the beats, which I do not attempt, should in general proceed along Eriksonian lines. But in view of the significant minority of beats in their thirties and forties, it should place greater stress on the persistence in more or less chronic form of some psychic states characterizing acute adolescent pathology.

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is more of an "operator"—has a more consciously patterned lifestyle (such as a concern to dress well) and makes more frequent economic raids on the frontiers of the square world—but stressed their social bonds with hipsters, such as their liking for drugs, for jazz music, and, above all, their common scorn for bourgeois career orientations. Among Village beats today, however, "hipster" usually has a pejorative connotation: one who is a mannered showoff regarding his hipness, who "comes on" too strongly in hiptalk, etc. In their own eyes, beats are hip but are definitely not hipsters.

Although beats are characteristically ignorant of history, even of their own history, most know the oft-discussed origin of "beat" as applied to the postwar disaffected. But all are in the dark about "hip." The few Village beats with any opinion suppose that it comes from the "hep" of early 1940s jivetalk. Actually "hep" and "hip" are doublets; both come directly from a much earlier phrase, "to be on the hip," to be a devotee of opium smoking—during which activity one lies on one's hip. The phrase is obsolete, the activity obsolescent.

As early as 1938 David Maurer noted that due to the rapid decline of opium smoking much of its argot was being loosely transferred to other types of drug taking, "frequently without a full knowledge of the original meanings of the words transferred."* Today's use of "hip" extends this process, for now the word has the generalized meaning of "in the know" and even among beat drug users doesn't always refer specifically to knowledge of drugs.

II

Paradoxically, nearly all articles on the beats neglect the thread that colors beat life: the overwhelming majority of beats are *not* exhibitionists or publicity-seekers but precisely the opposite. Articles by beat writers, who belong nearly always to the publicity-seeking minority, implicitly deny this fact. And square writers, who as often as not simply lift their material from beat writings, don't know this fact, or minimize it because it is unexciting, or explicitly deny it. One of the rare exceptions is Caroline Bird, who nearly four years ago correctly noted of the beat that "his main goal is to keep out of a society which, he thinks, is trying to make everyone over in its own image. . . . He may affect [distinctive dress] but *usually prefers to skulk unmarked.*"** Today, despite the attention given to beats in the mass media, despite the consequence that some beats now resemble professional "angry young men" securing toeholds in the lower levels of our "establishment" (the slicker cheesecake magazines) and yearning for our peculiar version of the aristocratic embrace *(Life),* Miss Bird's observations are still generally valid.

Nearly all Village beats most of the time and most of them all of the time want not even a hostile relationship with squares. They restrict

* Cf. Maurer's "Argot of the Underworld Narcotic Addict: Part II," *American Speech,* vol. 13, Oct. 1938, p. 179, fn. 3. Cf. also Alfred Lindesmith, *Opiate Addiction* (Bloomington, Indiana: Principia Press, 1947), p. 215.

** "Born 1930: The Unlost Generation," *Harper's Bazaar,* February 1957. My italics

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their relations with squares to that bare minimum needed to live at all. Many a beat, sociable enough with other beats, goes for weeks at a time without engaging in a single real conversation with a square, his "conversation" with squares being limited to the few ritualistic phrases required to make food purchases, etc. Moreover, the large majority of beats do not flaunt their physical presence before the public gaze. Most beats dress in an ordinary lower-class manner, distinctive only to middle-class eyes. A substantial minority, between a fourth and a third, also wear various kinds of badges (beards, typically) but usually do so as a ready means of identifying themselves to one another and to promote a "we" feeling, not out of a desire to call the attention of outsiders to themselves. Most of even this badge-wearing minority want to remain quite inconspicuous as far as squares are concerned. Their badges are meant for fellow beats, and were worn long before publicity made the squares aware of them; it will hardly do to call these beats "exhibitionists" just because squares have lately stolen their signals. These fundamental points are garbled or suppressed, when known at all, as more and more writers discover a market for articles on "colorful" beats.

It is indeed obvious to the tourist that some beats need frequently to proclaim their negative identities by costume and behavior designed to shock. But that is no reason for even our social scientists to remain merely tourists and write, for example, as if beats typically were devoted to "conspicuous consumption of the self"—an absurdity comparable to suggesting that most homosexuals are drag queens. To describe only what is more or less deliberately exposed to tourist view is to forget that the cool world is an iceberg, mostly underwater.

III

There has been in three years a great proliferation of Village coffee shops, chiefly because square patronage makes them profitable. New York's beat scene has become a major tourist attraction, just as happened earlier in San Francisco.

But an important secondary reason for the coffee shops is that in the last three years the attitudes of beats in their thirties have spread rapidly downward all the way to very young teenagers (13-15 years old), who need these shops because they are too young to fake their age in bars. About a fourth of those under 16 are fully beat and have totally abandoned, among other things, such square institutions for teenagers as parental home and school. The remainder are quasi-beat, not so much because they have doubts about beat life as because they are not yet able completely to escape parental control.

Some newer coffee shops are on the lower east side (out of the Village proper) and a couple of that neighborhood's restaurants have also become fairly beat. In part this is the result of low-income Villagers moving eastward in the face of rising Village rents. But these shops cater also to beats from various parts of the city who want to avoid Village tourists. These beats, together with many others who go to Village coffee shops entirely or almost entirely during non-tourist hours, and still others—in-

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cluding most older beats—who rarely go to coffee shops at all (a great portion of beat social life takes place at private parties), comprise the large majority of beats.

IV

Many beats are teenage runaways, but hardly any are being sought by the police; apparently most come from families that would just as soon be rid of them. But Village beats, teenagers and otherwise, are not predominantly of lower-class parentage. Roughly 35% are from the lower class and 60% or a little more from the middle class. There is also a sprinkling (about five per cent) of upper-class renegades; as a group they seem the most psychologically disturbed of all beats and as often as not are remittance men, i.e., are sent money by their parents to stay away from home.*

The composition of the Village beat population today, compared with that of three years ago, shows several other changes in addition to the greatly increased number of young teenagers. A dozen or so Italian neighborhood kids are breaking away from Italian community values (always opposed to Village bohemians) and are attracted to the beats. And some Puerto Ricans are beginning to enter the beat scene; previously the only "American" group one found them in was the homosexuals.

Although a number of beat writers are of Jewish origin, the proportion of Jews among the white male beats has severely declined in the past three years, and in the Village beat scene they now seem to be considerably under-represented. Jewish women, on the other hand, are if anything over-represented. Otherwise there seems nothing unusual about the religious origins of the beats.

A few of the newer beat women are worn-out ex-prostitutes from the Times Square area, in their early twenties, who realized they had nothing to show for several years of hustling—no love, no money, no friendships. They want to escape the hustling scene but of course have difficulty adjusting to a square scene, and hence are attracted to the beats, toward whom they are motherly. Conversely, a few beat men hustle themselves a couple of nights a week in uptown homosexual bars, making enough money to stay straight in the Village the rest of the week. In one way this last is typical of the odd job the beat takes when, despite all his efforts to avoid it, he must work: he doesn't want to be *seen* working by other beats, and prefers a job away from the beat scene (except that it is considered all right to work in a beat coffee shop).

But the biggest change in the composition of the Village beat scene, and in Village life generally, is the far greater absolute number and far greater percentage of Negroes.

Until about three years ago there were few Negroes in the Village and they were forced to have their own bar, Johnny Romero's. Romero's

* The above percentages are tentative estimates, based on quite sketchy material concerning family origins. I used the following rough-and-ready class definitions: lower-class origin if parents' annual combined income was under $4500; middle class, $4500-$9000; upper class, $9000 or more.

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paid off the syndicate after several broken windows reminded the owner of this civic duty, and of course paid the police, but was eventually closed because it got too hot to handle (one of the bar's prostitutes was discovered to be a juvenile runaway from a prominent family).

Today, hundreds of Negroes can be found in any number of Village coffee shops and bars, some of which, e.g., Polelle's, function mainly as places for Negroes who want white girls to pick up same. The Negroes around Polelle's haven't much in common except such desires, and range from very beat to Ivy League types. The only thoroughly beat Negro scene is the Maracanda, where most of the clientele are junkies and Charlie Parker is the squarest thing on the jukebox.

V

On the increase in the Village and its east-side adjunct are beats with literally no place to live, without even a slum sleeping-room. I'd guess that at any given time these homeless beats number not less than 150.

To sleep, some drop in on friends who live in cheap lofts; often there will be 10 or 12 people sleeping on a loft floor. Or they sleep in tenement hallways—the top landing, just inside the door to the roof, being the usual choice for beats (unlike homeless alcoholics, who usually must choose the less secure ground level because they can't make it up the stairs). In warm weather there are rooftops; or parks, where one has a 50-50 chance of not being awakened by the police. And some beats sit out the wee damp hours in Smith's, one of the restaurants in the area.

For several years Smith's has been a favorite place for junkies and marihuana smokers to meet their connections. But it has been very hot ever since the police stationed an informer there and one night arrested eleven people, and since then it has had a fink on more or less permanent detail. The first fink uncovered by the beats and junkies was replaced; but at this writing the police haven't bothered to replace his replacement, and the current fink, who is known to all the regular customers and knows that he is known, often gets baited with stage whispers of "Can anybody turn me on?" etc.

VI

Naturally, the Italian residents of the Village are going down fighting.* The older ones, upset by the noise and the Negroes, this summer petitioned their political chiefs to do something—whereupon two of the most prominent coffee shops were closed by the Fire Department for violations, one of them later being permitted to reopen at half its former capacity. (The shops selected were of course non-Italian, though hardly any commercial establishment within blocks of the area doesn't have fire violations.) However, contrary to the opinion of some beats, it is doubtful that the syndicate had anything to do with the closings, for long ago

*"Italian" refers mainly to Sicilians, the dominant Village ethnic group whose criminal minority control Village nightlife and are prominent in the national crime syndicate, not to Neapolitans living south of the Village.

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the syndicate put aside its anti-Negro feelings in favor of its commercial interests and declared itself in for a piece of the beat pie. Except for a few upper-class places north of Washington Square, every Village coffee shop or bar or restaurant, beat or non-beat, pays "grease" to the syndicate as well as to the cops.*

Many younger Italians of course make violent efforts to roll back the beat invasion, especially during summer with everyone in the streets. Most of the violence is directed against Negroes and much of it is focused in and near the main beat crossroads, Washington Square Park. The kids under twelve usually restrict themselves to throwing water bombs and feces down on the beats from Macdougal Street rooftops; but more than occasionally beats are also slugged by junior hoodlums from the local Catholic Youth Organization—described by one beat as America's only juvenile gang with a lawyer on retainer. The daily newspapers, except for the New York *Post,* ignore such things as much as they can, and even the *Post* dare not offend part of the readership by mentioning the C. Y. O.; nor, for that matter, can the *Village Voice.*

I summarize one of many incidents:

> A beat couple are set upon and stomped by the C. Y. O. gang. The cops arrest the beats along with some of their attackers. The beats of course can't make bail. As a result of the beating the girl has a miscarriage while in the Women's House of Detention. The cops, discovering that the girl is underage, point out to the couple that if anyone talks about the miscarriage they will have to charge her as a sexual delinquent and him as contributing to her delinquency. At the hearing everyone plays it cool and all are released. But the cops have the judge lecture the male beat that he is barred from the Village and will be rapped the next time he's found there, so now he stays east of Third Avenue. This has raised his status in the eyes of some: "A way out bit, man. I mean, lots of studs've been eighty-sixed from bars but he's the first one eighty-sixed from the whole fucking Village."

Some beats have correctly observed that opposition to them is in part displaced hostility toward another "invading" group that the Italians can't fight effectively because it is too rich: the uptown squares who

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* Syndicate enforcement methods are the well-publicized strongarm ones. Less known are the police methods for handling those who contribute too little or the rare idealist who contributes nothing at all. These methods are nonviolent, flexible and various. Among them are "disorderly premises" (almost anything will make it stick), "finding" heroin in the place—one astonished response: "Man, don't crucify me, you know I only smoke pot"—and having a New York newspaper columnist blast the place until the owner comes across or the police are "forced" by the publicity to raid him.

Given the system's values, the method chosen usually represents a quite rational police estimate as to how severely the holdout needs to be punished—whether it is best to just scare him, or have him fined, or cause him expensive repairs, or close him for a bit, or have the S. L. A. lift his liquor license, or send him to jail. Occasionally irrational factors are involved, such as one cop's invariable method of operation or another's sadism. Much less frequently, there is also an "outside" factor; e.g., public outcry leading to pressure from high brass, or an owner's strong political connections, or the owner of, say, an established homosexual bar being outbid by someone else who wants to obtain the local homosexual business.

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are tearing down low-rent Village housing, moving into fancy buildings that Italians can't afford, and in the process of wresting local political control from the DeSapio machine.

VII

Beats avoid work. Contrary to what I expected among the non-junkies, this avoidance is typically not a rationalization for any kind of work incapacity (such as one finds in, say, the neurotic sleeper who can't get up in the morning), but is almost always a matter of conviction pure and simple. This conviction is so strong that many beats are willing to starve for it. Consequently, even among the non-junkies there is widespread malnutrition, and many instances of beat "passivity" owe as much to lack of food energy as anything else.

Since an important factor in some kinds of retreatism is an inability to meet job norms (whether legitimate or criminal), it should be emphasized that beats typically can meet such norms but voluntarily choose not to do so. True, most beats are decidedly neurotic; and because they generally refuse their chances for either job training or college education, they can get only low-skilled jobs. But their intelligence and native talents are likely to be superior when not average, and their neuroses usually do not as such incapacitate them for holding jobs. Furthermore, their ideological refusal to work is not essentially a product of neurosis, even for the most neurotic of them, but is largely cultural in origin. (In this respect beats remind one of professional criminals, who may or may not be neurotic but whose neuroses usually have little to do with the genesis of their criminality.)

Unlike most of their age-mates, beats are keen critics of the society in which they have grown up. Their anti-work ideology is not nearly so much a sign of inability to accept the reality principle as a sign of disaffiliation from particular, mutable realities. Sensible of America's inequitable distribution of income *and* its increasing depersonalization of work and leisure *and* its Permanent War Economy, the beats have responded with the Permanent Strike. This response happens to be tragically mistaken, destructive of the self as well as incapable of provoking social change; but it is a virtuous error, arising out of dismay at things that are rotten in the social fabric.

A few beats live off parents or girlfriends and are "social parasites" as pure as anyone living off dividend checks. Most beats scuffle; they take jobs temporarily when all else fails,* but exist most of the time by combining panhandling, quick moves from one pad to another to beat the rent, a complex round of borrowings and repayments, short cons such as selling marihuana that is heavily cut, etc. This freedom from routine

* Beats quit jobs as soon as possible, seldom working a total of four months per year. But most beats of several years' standing have at one time or another—usually just once—tried the expedient of working barely long enough in a given year to be eligible for unemployment compensation. Informants recently on the west coast say that because Hawaii is now a state and one can collect unemployment benefits there, it is, among those beats who can scrape up boat fare, becoming increasingly popular as against Mexico.

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work is bought at an enormous price: not only does scuffling often consume more time and brainpower than a square job,* but its effect on leisure is more stultifying than any job dissatisfaction would be.

Beats believe that voluntary poverty is an intellectual gain; they gain by giving up the evil effects of meaningless work, gadgetry and the mass media. But the net effect on their leisure is that even the most ardent intellectuals among them often can't spare the carfare to get to the better free libraries and concerts and art exhibits, seldom can attend cultural events for which admission is charged, and never can build up reasonable book and record libraries of their own. Their meager amount of intellectual consumption is not only questionable as such, but of course also stunts their growth as intellectual producers. "Holy poverty" enforces comparative poverty of the mind.

A number of times I used the above argument with beats, and got variants of one response: better to have a poorer intellectual life than get caught up in the rat race. And with the rare beat who conceded that the rat race occasionally could, with much prodding, be made to yield up work meaningful in itself, the argument quickly became the old interminable one about the virtues of remaining simon pure vs. "boring from within," with the beat being confirmed in his purity as approaching daylight reminded me to stagger off for a couple of hours' sleep before rejoining the rat race.

VIII

I looked hard for changes in the beat attitude toward politics, but found instead confirmation of my old impression that it is wrong to describe the beats as apolitical *lumpen* who are potential fascists (Malaquais) or potential socialists (Mailer).

Far from being *lumpen,* beats are more keenly aware of the range of political alternatives than is the average voter. They are not apolitical but consciously and deliberately *anti*political, which is something else entirely, and, as a common attitude, something new in American history. Beats suffer not from political apathy but from political antipathy. They totally "resign" from society in so far as this is possible, not least of all from its politics, and reject extreme political sects with no less vigor than they reject major parties.

It might seem reasonable to call the beat an anarchist, for he objects to representative government on the same ground that Proudhon did, i.e., that no man can truly "represent" another man's thoughts and feelings—but more important is the fact that the beat doesn't want to promote anarchism or any other ism.**

All this has some virtues of its defects. If it means that the beat

* This and other intelligent objections to the beat life-style can be found in the anonymous "open letter to the beats from a spy deep in enemy territory," *Beatitude* No. 15, June 1960 (San Francisco), pp. 17-20.

** In this respect as in some others, it is misleading to rely on the beat literary record, where one can, occasionally, find a quasi-political stance. Those who see the beats exclusively through their literature should remember that over 90% of the beats neither write for publication nor wish to do so.

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rejects any rational political planning, it means equally that he is not going to be a sucker for any charismatic leader whether of the right or left. Of course he is pleased to see beat attitudes spread, but he isn't interested in joining any organized social movement toward that end. Each of the three words "organized social movement" sounds obscene to the beat's ears.* And though naturally amused to see some of his fellows such as Allen Ginsberg achieve notoriety and shake up the squares, he doesn't regard Ginsberg or anyone else as his "spokesman" (much less "leader") in the sense that squares conceive of spokesmanship. The beat's only spokesman is himself.

American intellectuals, and those of European origin especially, misunderstand this because they are prone to see every irrational excrescence in American political life as a sign of fascism round the corner (recall the panicky overinterpretations of MacArthur's "triumphal" return from Korea, etc.). To those who insist on finding a German ancestor for the beats, I would suggest that the proper ancestor is not the storm trooper but rather the philosopher-poet Friedrich Nietzsche, who correctly described himself as "an ardent anti-antisemite," as "opposed to everything that calls itself *Reichsdeutsch,*" and as "the last anti-political German."

If the three hundred and more beats I talked with are in any way representative, then many journalistic detractors of them—sometimes misled by ambiguities in "The White Negro"—have made utterly false equations between the teenage hoodlum and beat worlds. These armchair social analysts need to catch up with current sociological theory and learn the differences between "conflict" and "retreatist" delinquent subcultures. Even more, they need to stop bombinating *in vacuo* and actually meet the people they write about—if only to learn that for every beat who is unusually given to violence there are at least two dozen beats who are sincere pacifists.

IX

In the Village beat world, as in all bohemias by definition, the socially disapproved forms of sexual behavior are tolerated if not encouraged. And as one would expect in the current bohemia, inter-racial intercourse is particularly frequent.

What one would not necessarily expect is the peculiar pattern that homosexual behavior takes among the beats. Proportionately, the amount of such behavior is as high as in the non-beat world even though the

* In view of my earlier finding (DISSENT, Winter 1958) that the beats are not totally atomized individuals but instead form a subculture, they must of course have some social organization. But it is of the most tenuous sort. The beat group approximates the *primitive band* as described by Ralph Linton: a group of fairly constant membership larger than the family, compact, nomadic but exploiting a fairly well-defined territory, socially self-sufficient and facing inward, without *rites de passage,* without formal governmental machinery, etc.

The last two features (perhaps the last three) distinguish the beat group sharply from the gang. Although Lewis Yablonsky in "The Violent Gang" (*Commentary,* August 1960) claims that today's gang "lacks all features of an organized group," he goes on to contradict himself by describing types of gang officers and their duties, etc. The very concept of office is nonexistent in any beat group.

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beat whose outlets are entirely or almost entirely homosexual is proportionately very much rarer than his non-beat counterpart. In other words an extraordinary number of male beats, whites as well as Negroes, are fully bisexual or in some cases polymorphous perverse.* They accept homosexual experiences almost as casually as heterosexual ones. Even beats with numerous and continuing post-adolescent homosexual experiences typically do not feel the need to define themselves as homosexuals and create some sort of beat wing of the homosexual world. Nor do they give up heterosexual involvements. Beats not only tolerate deviant sex roles but, to a much greater extent than previous bohemians, display a very high tolerance of sex-role ambiguity.

Most likely this subcultural trait was originally transmitted to the white beats by Negro beats, for not only do Negroes set much of the tone of beat life, but Negro culture has always had a higher tolerance of sexual ambiguity than white culture, and also the non-beat white groups showing high tolerance (e. g., seamen, ex-convicts) have had a special conditioning factor—prolonged absence from women—that is lacking in the beat world.

The unusual breadth of beat sex life is accompanied by very little depth. All types of beats at all age levels fail to establish deep and lasting sexual relationships. Lack of virility, however defined, is a frequent problem among the white males (and a characteristic of all long-time junkies); this substantial minority is essentially passive. The majority of beats, conversely, engage in an endless series of short-term affairs that bespeak much more of acting out than of action. Their bed-hopping "genitality" comes about precisely because they too are sexually impoverished—"orgastically impotent" in Reich's terms— and have yet to discover that in sex life there is no automatic passage from quantity to quality. Consequently, even among the oldest beats it is uncommon to find a couple who have been living together more than two or three years; and as often as not, such couples have managed to stick together only by replacing sex with the symbiotic cement of mutual drug addiction.**

X

For obvious reasons beat drug-taking is a furtive affair, and hence few outsiders realize that it is a totally pervasive part of beat life, both as an activity and as a topic of conversation. The illegal use of drugs is one of the handful of things that characterize all male beats with very rare exceptions, and a good majority of the females. But contrary to some popular views, (a) the majority use non-addicting drugs exclusively and (b) the majority of such users do not eventually go on to use addicting drugs and become junkies.

* In terms of the Kinsey heterosexual-homosexual rating scale from zero to six, beats show an unusual clustering at points two, three and four. Cf. Alfred Kinsey, Wardell Pomeroy and Clyde Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1948), pp. 638-641.

** This is not to imply that junkie couples achieve long-run stability (the reverse doubtless is true), but rather that in its *initial* phases mutual addiction "helps keep the family together."

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I talked with about 285 male beats and directly or indirectly queried about 205 concerning their possible illegal use of drugs, of whom only 14 denied any such use whatever; of about 25 female beats queried, out of about 40 I talked with, 9 denied illegal use of any drug.* Some beats who denied such use were doubtless lying. Although for most beats I did not obtain data on frequency of use, it seems certain that the majority use drugs at least once every couple of days, whether the drugs are addicting or non-addicting or a combination. Many younger beats have been thoroughly socialized to drug-taking without ever having been socialized to drinking, and are teetotalers when it comes to alcohol.

Beats do not constitute the majority of those who use drugs illegally, but their lives often intersect with that majority at the points of supply. Consequently much of the information below, though gathered from Village beats, deals with general New York drug distribution.

A. Addicting Drugs. Heroin is the drug of choice among beat junkies, though a few are hooked on barbiturates. The other addicting opiates and synthetics—morphine, codeine, demerol, dolophine, pantopon, etc.—are all used freely by junkies when available, but in the Village they are available less often than heroin or barbiturates, and no beat junkie seems primarily addicted to one of these drugs as such; rather, these drugs are used in addition to heroin or as substitutes for it.

Opium itself is often available. However, it is expensive ($15-20 for a *toy,* a ball about the size of a large pea) and beats regard it as something to try once for kicks but otherwise not worth the price—partly because it is less powerful than its main derivatives and partly because there is rarely an opium layout and experienced preparer available. A few beats claim there is still one old-style "opium den" in Chinatown, to which no whites or Negroes and very few Chinese are admitted. Although disappointed at being barred, they admire the Chinese for playing it so cool.

Apart from questions of secrecy, it is hard to estimate the percentage of junkies among the beats because there are marginal cases (those who use addicting drugs occasionally but have not become addicts) and because some addicts cannot yet admit to themselves, much less to an outsider, that they have been hooked. I counted as junkies not only those who indicated they were, but all admitted users of addicting drugs who indicated they had ever experienced withdrawal discomfort—whether or not they indicated that drugs had been taken to relieve such discomfort, and regardless of frequency of use.** By this criterion, among Village beats under 20, about one out of 15 is a junkie; between 20 and 25, about one out of 11; over 25, about one out of nine.

* The figures are exact for those denying illegal use of drugs; the other figures are estimates, as I didn't start keeping strict count of these until part way through my investigation. My talks with beats were not formal interviews and varied considerably in length. With some beats in the sample I spent less than five minutes; with others, more than 30 hours.

** A partial justification for this procedure is the statement of Lindesmith, *op. cit.,* p. 75: "The writer has never heard of a user who, having experienced the full intensity of the withdrawal symptoms in full knowledge of their relation to the absence of opiates, did not become an addict."

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Off and on during the past year—though not at present—there have been in the Village severe shortages of heroin. Users unanimously state that this has not been due to an increase in Village arrests but entirely to another factor: the syndicate some time ago decided to pull out of the drug business at least temporarily—this is what the Apalachin meeting was about—because of successful government prosecution of some very big shots (Genovese, Stromberg, *et al.*).

Negroes and Puerto Ricans controlled some distribution in their neighborhoods but were not equipped to fill entirely the hole that the syndicate pullout left in their own supplies, much less take over distribution elsewhere. Apparently Negro and Puerto Rican areas at first felt the pinch as much as the Village, not merely because of the syndicate pullout but because many more white junkies began trying to score from them. Indeed, some white Village pushers and users of heroin moved to the more racially mixed areas of the upper west side and lower east side.

When the syndicate pulled out, for some junkies there was at first total panic; their connections simply had no junk. Now all junkies can obtain heroin regularly again—a few believe that syndicate members previously unassociated with the drug traffic are entering it—but complain that the price has risen steeply in the form of greater dilution. (In the absence of actual analysis of drug samples, such statements should be treated with caution. Complaints about increasing dilution are always common among junkies, the main reason being the junkies' increasing tolerance of drugs.) Three junkies say that there have been a sharply increased number of sick junkies unable to support their habits at former levels, trying to taper off on such things as Cocinil, and hitting drugstores so often that some stores have been totally "burned down," i.e., refuse to supply even non-prescription items to known junkies.

B. Non-addicting Drugs. Beats frequently use non-addicting and non-hallucinatory stimulants, such as dexedrine. But their use of non-addicting drugs focuses invariably and overwhelmingly on the hallucinogens. Among these, marihuana is the drug of choice. Marihuana smokers also use peyote, hashish and synthetic mescalin in that order of frequency. Recently a few marihuana smokers have experimented with using peyote exclusively for extended periods. Cocaine is seldom used because it is expensive and the "high" it produces does not last long; beats say it is an upper-class drug, used mostly in wealthy show business and criminal circles.

Beats who use no illegal drugs are few. To estimate the proportion using marihuana, it would not be far wrong to simply reverse the above estimates concerning beat junkies. Thus, among beats under 20, marihuana smokers would outnumber junkies nearly 14 to one; between 20 and 25, nearly 10 to one; over 25, nearly eight to one.* About a dozen

* These estimates differ astoundingly from those usually found in the literature on narcotics, where it is typically estimated that about 91½% of all New York drug users known to authorities use addicting drugs and about 8½% use non-addicting drugs

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men and two women stated that most beat women smoke marihuana but few are real "potheads" (devotees of marihuana) and that most smoke it mainly because their men do.

Although beat heroin users and beat marihuana smokers are part of one subculture, they tend to split into two separate groups when it comes to the specific activity of taking drugs, each developing its own customs.

As Howard Becker has shown, marihuana smoking is a group activity in which the psychic response to the drug in large part has to be *taught* to the newcomer.* (It appears that marihuana is a drug in which tolerance not only does not go up, but as a result of learning actually goes down.) Beat marihuana smokers not only confirm this, but indicate that even after the user has internalized group norms and thus can get high alone, his drug-taking continues to have a much more social quality than that of the heroin user. One made a remark that would be almost inconceivable from a heroin user: "Sometimes it's okay to get high by yourself, but then I always like to go out and bounce it off other studs." Beat statements about group marihuana-using sessions and group heroin-using sessions consistently indicate a far greater degree of mutuality in the former, particularly with regard to both verbal and nonverbal sharing of drug-induced psychic states.** It is possible that this mutuality has a strong latent homosexual component and that this is what bars most female beats from full participation; the four beats I asked about this thought there was something to it.

Narcotics police in the Village, say the beats, used to spend all their time chasing junk (addicting drugs). Marihuana users were safe if they stayed on their own scenes, and were arrested only if they were discovered accidentally—typically if they were on a junk scene when the

such as marihuana. Cf. *Second Interim Report of the State of New York Committee on Narcotic Study*, Legislative Document (1958), no. 16, p. 12.

There are several possible reasons for the discrepancy, all of which seem to be operative here: (a) Though I tried to secure a representative sample of beats, junkies may have been slightly under-represented. (b) Some beats who are junkies doubtless kept this fact hidden from me. (c) Beats are somewhat unrepresentative of New York drug users generally, because nearly all the junkies attracted to New York from the rest of the country (New York is now estimated to have between one-third and one-half of America's junkies) probably go to non-beat circles. (d) The number of New York marihuana smokers may indeed be several times the number of junkies, but the latter pose such a severe problem that narcotics police must give them near-total attention, and hence marihuana smokers rarely come to the attention of the authorities. (This would follow from the beat testimony cited below, which there seems no reason to doubt, concerning the pattern of narcotics arrests.) (e) Additional support for the view that marihuana smokers may greatly outnumber junkies is that the latter often must turn to crime to support their habits and/or turn themselves in for treatment—both of which bring them to the attention of the authorities—whereas marihuana smokers do neither.

The one other comparative survey of drug use I know of that does not depend on arrest rates also finds that marijuana smokers outnumber heroin users, though the differences are not nearly as startling. Cf. Charles Winick, "The Use of Drugs by Jazz Musicians," *Social Problems*, vol. VII, no. 3, Winter 1959-60, especially p. 242.

* Howard S. Becker, "On Becoming a Marijuana User," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIX, Nov. 1953, pp. 235-242.

** This psychic sharing among marihuana smokers reaches its peak in the "contact high." Cf. Winick, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

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police came looking for junk. This is still generally true, but beats note that in the past year there have been two major Village raids on strictly marihuana-smoking groups. And the police forced the one coffee shop that earlier this summer was selling peyote openly (not against New York State law) to discontinue sales, by invoking a city health ordinance concerning potentially poisonous foods.

During the past four months (May through August) there have been recurrent shortages in the Village marihuana supply. These shortages have been more frequent and of longer duration than heroin shortages, a situation the beats say is truly extraordinary: "Man, there's never been anything like it. All the smack you want and a complete pot panic."* To obtain marihuana at all, beats have sometimes been forced to buy it in a form (already rolled into "joints," rather than loose) and at a price (75 cents or $1 per joint) that they say are usually reserved for the rich college crowd. There are many stories about marihuana being cut with bay leaves, oregano, etc., and about an increase in the number of "burns" (in which someone who claims he can obtain drugs takes money in advance and never returns).**

Beats feel that the marihuana shortages, unlike those of heroin, have little to do with the syndicate lying low, for the distribution of marihuana has always been only slightly syndicate and mostly independent. The consensus is that marihuana supplies have not significantly decreased but in recent months have had to be spread over a suddenly expanded market.

The horde of new teenage beats, many just arrived in the Village this summer, nearly all use marihuana.† Moreover, while the Village beat market has been expanding, some of its normal supplies have been deflected to new markets elsewhere. Beats say that the use of marihuana in non-beat circles was until recently pretty much restricted to jazz musicians and theater people, but that in the past year it has been spreading rapidly in the worlds of advertising, radio-TV, college students, etc.—the *Playboy* readership essentially—and that some suppliers formerly in the Village have shifted to the favorite hangouts of these groups because they pay more. It is said that some ex-Village pushers of marihuana

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* "Smack" is one of several terms for heroin. Marihuana is usually "pot," though "boo" and other terms are sometimes heard. "Panic," usually in the form of "there's a panic on," means that there is a drug shortage. The argot is of course subject to rapid change. For humorous effect, beats will sometimes use a term that is no longer current except among square writers: "Got a reefer, man?"

** Some older drug users say the greater number of burns is due to the increased mobility of today's beats. Beats are in fact more mobile than old-style hoboes. Not only do they shuttle between New York and California, but they have their own "international set" whose principal stopping places are in Mexico, the Balearic Islands, and Paris.

† In the opinion of some beats, which I share, the new teenage beats will end up producing proportionately fewer junkies than older groups have done. This is *not* because they are aware that "just fooling around" with heroin almost always leads to addiction, for there is hardly a heroin addict alive who didn't know that to begin with. It is rather that among beats today the use of heroin has lost much of its glamor, is less often considered a requisite of being hip, and frequently is even considered "uncool." A similar change seems to have taken place in the ideology of jazz musicians. Cf. Winick, *op. cit., passim.*

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and hashish now work the uptown east side bars, and that earlier this summer two Village pushers took off for Provincetown when they discovered that what would be a $5 bag of marihuana in the Village was selling for $15 to the Provincetown sportscar set.

XI

Almost all Village beats technically are literate, and some whites have even attended college, but at best a sixth are habituated to reading (none seem addicted) and far fewer are concerned with writing. (Most square articles on "the beats" go astray because beat writers, being highly visible, get all the attention and thus a small and atypical part is taken for the whole.) Among the minority who could be called regular readers, the "literary" materials consist almost wholly of writing by romantic hedonists, much of it third-rate or worse and nearly all of it contemporary.

Interest in Zen passed its peak over a year ago and has radically declined. In the Village at least, Zen now appears to have been a beat fad whose only lasting significance in American intellectual history is that it (along with jazz-cum-poetry) marks the first time that a west coast bohemia exerted a major influence on an eastern one. About the only carryover from earlier mystical concerns is that some beats continue to take an interest in divination; but formerly beats used the *I Ching, or Book of Changes* for this purpose, whereas now one finds the use of Tarot cards or some Harlem-derived routine.

In so far as most beats, whites and Negroes alike, can be said to have a dominant intellectual interest, it is jazz music. And the jazz world is the single non-beat segment of American society that often attracts beats. (Their admiration for it is not requited, to judge by musicians' complaints.) The nature and depth of the beats' relation to jazz have remained unchanged over the past three years, except that these years have produced some new heroes (e.g., Ray Charles) and a new villain (for some beats, Ornette Coleman has replaced Dave Brubeck as the arch fraud).

Although the white beat's attraction to the jazz world is often the very core of his "white Negro" role, there is little uniquely "beat" about all this. Such involvement is socially not very different from the relationship of adolescent whites to Negro jazz in several American non-beat and pre-beat bohemias. For example, nearly 20 years ago, when I was v. p. of my high school jazz club, a 13-year-old zoot suiter, we often used to make the Harlem "balcony scenes"—boosting old Bessie Smiths and Hot Fives from the balcony of the Rainbow Music Shop before the wartime scrap drive wrecked the supply, going wild in the Apollo Theatre's sweet-smelling second balcony—odoriferous from pomade and pot, though we didn't know about the latter at the time—to a Basie-Millinder twin bill. And we traveled Swing Street when it still swung (where half the time we'd get kicked out despite our borrowed I. D.) to hear Billie Holiday at the Onyx Club or Tatum at the Three Deuces. Today, the big boosting scenes are Goody's and the Colony instead of the Rainbow;

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Swing Street has been replaced by scattered Village clubs; the white intellectual jazz mentors are Nat Hentoff and Martin Williams instead of Ralph Berton and Gene Williams; there are goatees instead of 12-inch peg pants, etc. But apart from the music itself, and the fact that now one merely listens to it at Birdland instead of stomping to it at the Savoy, not much has really changed.

XII

A few beats, invariably among the youngest, are not so much interested in jazz as in the folk music of the "ethnic" set. But all beats reject the folksy-artsy group as people because in fundamental attitude the latter, despite the number of Negroes among them, are un- or anti-beat.* The Village devotees of ethnic music are historically minded, scholarly, middle-class youths, mostly Jewish, who are trying to disown their parents' culture not by becoming beat but rather by proving that ancient proverb, "New York ain't America."

The intersection of beat and "ethnic" circles, and indeed of Village social circles generally, can be seen at its warm-weather wildest in the hundreds of people who on Sunday afternoons gather round the children's wading pool in Washington Square Park. The circles here are as much concentric as intersecting.

The inner circle consists of people who arrive by one p.m. and thus get seats on the rim of the pool and on the steps leading down into it; this circle is a mixture of early-rising square Villagers, many of whom have brought their children to wade, and beats who get there early because they've been up all night. (The beats used to get high and roll around in the pool with the kiddies, fully clothed, until the Park Department erected signs restricting the pool's use to those under 12 years of age.) Surrounding this is a second, standing circle of clusters of folk and hillbilly performers and their listeners: uptown tourists and new-style rich Villagers, "ethnic" teenagers, Italians, a few beats. Around this is a third circle, also quite mixed but consisting mostly of beats asking each other what's happening, tourists with cameras trying to elbow their way into the second circle for a good shot, and tight-trousered Village homosexuals walking their dogs and cruising each other.

XIII

In going through a good-sized collection of beat and semi-beat little magazines, published in various cities here and abroad, I have been unable to find 150 writers who by any definition could be called beat. Given the fact that beat writers are not notably reluctant to take the first things that pop into their heads and send them out to the world (if only via the mimeograph machine), and that on a most conservative estimate there cannot be less than 2000 beats in New York alone, it

* When the Fire Department raided beat coffee shops, the proprietor of The Folklore Center on Macdougal Street went so far as to issue a mimeographed broadside (dated June 12, 1960) praising this action and condemning the beats. Shortly thereafter he had his window broken.

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would be charitable indeed to say that a tenth of the beats are concerned to write. But today in the Village and elsewhere, significantly more beats are writing than was the case three years ago, and it seems that now at least as high a proportion of them are writing as was true of earlier bohemians.* In four or five cases their motives are not of the highest—come to no more than the knowledge that one can pick up some change by reciting shockers to tourists in coffee shops—but most are sincere about their writing, and in any event whatever literary talent there may be among the beats now stands a good chance of being discovered.

Most beat literature is poor when it is not godawful. And this is certainly true of its best-publicized examples, which have been surpassed even by the minor Victorians: James Thomson's poetic howl of urban despair, *The City of Dreadful Night,* is greater by far than anything Ginsberg offers,** and in on-the-road literature the genuine gusto of George Borrow, for all his prudishness, is preferable to the faked-up fervor of Kerouac. As for the beat talk of achieving a "breakthrough" with respect to the old literary forms: this should be translated simply as "breakdown." The beats have not significantly extended the range of the old forms. And their contribution in the way of a new art form, if one can call it that, consists of bad poetry read to bad jazz, with not even an integration of the badnesses. The last point seems to have been realized by the beats themselves, for jazz-cum-poetry recitals occur infrequently these days.

Though a few beats regard Ezra Pound as one of their literary mentors, they see only the *épater l'académicien* side of him and don't dare face up to such typical Poundian dicta as: "Saxpence reward for any authenticated case of intellect having stopped a chap's writing poetry! You might as well claim the railway tracks stop the engine. No one ever claimed they would make it go." Beat writers start with a great deal against them. They are victims of a primitivist ideology that, in its oversimplified anti-academicism and anti-historicism, prevents many of them from reading much at all, prevents most of the others from reading anything written earlier than the day before yesterday, leads them into false and fatuous notions of "spontaneity," and keeps them from fully learning the technical skills involved in their art and fully exploiting whatever talents they may have.

The "spontaneity" nonsense may be discerned not only, or even primarily, in Kerouacian prose, but in the myriad beat poems written according to the new poetic that has received its most erudite expression in the "write like you breathe" and "composition by field" prosodic theory

*Still far less than 10%, however. In thinking of past bohemias we tend to recall only accomplishments and forget that for, say, every Village bohemian of the 1930s who actually sat down and wrote, there were several others just talking about it and a couple of dozen others doing not even that. Artists by definition know how to play, and hence attract many people who want to play all the time, which in turn makes it harder for artists to get their work done.

**_Howl_ will remain important in our literary history as the most influential programmatic statement of a beat worldview. I deny merely that it is good poetry.

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Charles Olson has elaborated.* Granted the obvious integrity of Olson himself, it remains true that "the importance of any theory," as P. W. Bridgman once remarked, "is what it actually does, not what it says it does or what its author thinks it does"—and that Olson's theory functions as a copout for poets with tin ears, with defective sense of rhythm and structure. The theory put into practice gets rid of "artificiality" by getting rid of art.

And yet, the beat literary scene is not nearly as dismal as it was in 1957. For there *are* beats with genuine literary ability, and despite their cockeyed theories this ability is occasionally beginning to show itself. During the past three years the beats have produced some permanently valuable additions to American letters. (This is more than can be said for the entire history of some literary schools. Try reading, say, *Proletarian Literature in the United States.)* Among these writings are: Gregory Corso's poem "Marriage"; John Rechy's "The Fabulous Wedding of Miss Destiny" (one of the most dazzling American stories in years, and so genuinely distinctive that the editors of *Best American Short Stories, 1960* couldn't bear to put it in their also-ran list of "distinctive" stories, much less give it honorable mention or reprint it); and Jack Gelber's play *The Connection* (which acts much better than it reads).** And because the beats, unlike their French existentialist cousins and rather like the earlier Dadaists, see "the absurd" in its comic implications as fully as its tragic ones, a good deal of beat literature that fails as Art is quite enjoyable as Wisecrack.†

The beat writer with the most raw potential is Gregory Corso. True enough, he lacks a couple of technical craft skills (which can be taught) and sometimes falls into the worst clichés of thought as well as style. But unlike our slick young technicians Corso shows some real talents (which cannot be taught): he often does have something to say, usually makes you feel that *he* feels what he's saying, and displays in abundance a virtue that is the keystone of fine poetry—loving, imaginative play with language. Whether he will surpass the limits imposed by beat ideology or remain an extraordinarily gifted primitive is problematical.

XIV

Both white and Negro beats are notably given to calling a spade a spade. One would never catch them describing race relations as "intergroup" relations even if they knew the term, nor describing the lower class as the "working" class or old people as "senior citizens." But this forthrightness of speech and attitude, laudable as it may be, is not accompanied by much clarity of vision. Nowhere is there greater dis-

* Cf. Olson's essay reprinted in Donald Allen, ed., *The New American Poetry, 1945-1960* (N. Y.: Grove Press, 1960), pp. 386-397.

** Corso's poem is most readily available in Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-212. Rechy's story is in *Big Table*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1959, pp. 11-39. *The Connection* is published by Grove Press.

† A recent example is "Wailing Wall for Richard Gumbiner—last seen," by Pierre Delattre and Alan Dienstag, in *Beatitude* no. 16, July 1960, no paging. This is the San Francisco magazine, not the rival *Beatitude* no. 16 published in New York by a defecting editor from San Francisco.

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parity between beat theory and practice than in the role that Negro beats, wittingly or unwittingly, are forced to play for white beats.

The several white beats I met who knew my earlier critique of them —unfortunately I met no Negro beats who knew it*—all disputed my claim that they accept the Negro only for his "Negro-ness" (as bringer of marihuana and jazz, etc.) and thus practice an inverted form of "keeping the nigger in his place." According to them, they really do accept the Negro in his totality. Maybe so; but I doubt it. White beats should be given credit for the best of conscious intentions, but it is disheartening how regularly their actions confirm that old Negro proverb, "Whenever you see a white man with a colored man, the white man wants something from the colored man."

To see that Negroes living in the inter-racial beat world are still "invisible men" means to become sharply aware of something that white beats characteristically dodge: no modern urban Negro—raised as he is on white movies, white comic books, white television—can avoid internalizing white ideals, most especially can he not avoid internalizing white ideals of physical beauty, and on one level or another of his consciousness he puts himself down every time he looks in a mirror. (Hence the enormous Negro hair-straightening and skin-lightening industries, the profound discrimination among Negroes themselves on the basis of skin color, the high yellow beauty on the cover of *Ebony* who gives the lie to the magazine's title, etc.) Contrary to what many white beats believe, there is hardly a Negro alive who in his heart of hearts doesn't want to be white, and the various kinds of Negro chauvinist movements invariably represent a reaction formation against the forbidden desire to be white.

The modern American Negro's need to be white is one culture trait that the white male beat, like most of his square white brethren, cannot emotionally accept. This comes out most clearly, though not exclusively, in beat sex life; the Negro's desire for white girls is continually and subtly opposed by the white males, whatever their conscious beliefs may be, *not* merely in the terms with which one usually opposes a sexual rival but with such remarks as "X is too hung up on balling white chicks" or "Y's trouble is that he's too fay-oriented," etc. Thus miscegenation in the beat world is essentially a conspiracy between white females and Negro males, that triumphs over strong white male opposition only because the latter can never become fully articulate since it contradicts the conscious ideology.

In addition to the remarks of white beats quoted above, there is evidence from the Negro side that all is not well.

Every Negro knows that the white man, though he dislikes all nonwhites, has especially hostile feelings toward American Negroes; he knows experientially the truth in Max Weber's remark that the differ-

* Some material that follows is touchy if not downright offensive to most Negroes, beat or non-beat. As I was able to explore all of it with only three Negro beats (two agreed completely, the other hedged on some parts), it should be regarded as subject to further proof or disproof.

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ence between the white man's attitude toward Indians and toward Negroes is that the Indians were never slaves. So the Negro who finds his status intolerable sometimes concludes that if he can't change his skin, at least he can try to escape his status as an *American* Negro—can try to enter some halfway house by pretending to be a Jamaican or Haitian or whatever. Recently the most influential halfway house among Negroes has been Islam.* These halfway houses are part of what Franklin Frazier calls the Negro "world of make-believe"—few Negroes or whites are really fooled by an American Negro's claim to be somebody else—but they do ease the pain somewhat. Now, it happens that several prominent jazz musicians have been converted to Islam. Statistically speaking, they represent a small portion of either American Negro Moslems or jazz musicians; and yet their presence has a real meaning, which is this: even if you're a very successful Northern Negro and move in circles that include many hip white admirers and make it with some cool white chicks, you're still expected to play it like a spade and it's still a drag.

The hip attitude toward Negroes is, to be sure, not only better than the usual square rejection of them but is superior to the phoney some-of-my-best-friends-are routines (which at best let in special performers of the arts, scholarship and politics under special conditions). And this ideology does mean that white beats meet with Negroes more often than white squares usually do. What is still questionable is the nature of these relationships.

Although the white beat grants the Negro a fuller role than other white "pro-Negro" groups do, he does it merely by compounding the limited roles those groups demand. For the white beat, the Negro fulfills the liberal's demand that he entertain plus the radical's demand that he symbolize the results of reactionary oppression plus the Harlem thrill-seeker's demand that he act out the primitive in all of us. One thing the Negro must *not* do is try to be white.

Instead of worrying about the Negro becoming "too fay-oriented" the white beats might consider accepting him in his inescapable aspect of Negro-wanting-to-be-white. They might even encourage it, for surely the only real solution to the psychological problems peculiar to the American Negro is the very solution that so worries our Southerners: miscegenation on a grand scale, the production of more and more Negroes who can pass, and ultimately the total "mongrelization" of the two races.

XV

I found it relatively easy to talk with beats, though the talk often had to be literally in their terms and representatives of the non-exhibitionist majority had to be sought out: first, because they are

* However, the emergence of West African nations is causing a shift among some Harlemites from a North African Moslem orientation to a West African non-Moslem one. Cf. for example, Priest Ofuntola Oserjeman, *Orisha: A First Glimpse of the African Religion of Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Trinidad and now U. S. A.* (N. Y.: Great Benin Books, African Library Series, n. d. [1960]), available from The Shango Temple, 71 East 125 Street.

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typically more tolerant than political sectarians, more willing to accept an outsider who makes an honest attempt to understand them; second, because I agree, as any socialist must, with many of their criticisms of modern society; third, because from the onset of my own adolescence until a couple of years thereafter (at which time I enlisted in the death-struggles of Marxism), I and some of my friends went through a "white Negro" phase similar to that of many young beats today. However, if one makes it clear to the beats, as I did, that he is essentially a square, he will run into some who will give him a rough time, he will occasionally be put on (a combination of being conned and being baited). This was overcome in nearly all cases.

Generally, the only real hindrance proved to be that the beats, who by definition avoid work, are nightpeople. With respect to drugs there was the special problem that anyone investigating this area must of course convince the people involved that he is not a fink or a plain-clothesman, and I was not always able to do so. Thus the material on drugs, full as it may seem, is actually the thinnest part of my essay.

Nearly all beats I talked with at any length were told that I would write about them, and with four exceptions fairly easily accepted this. Nor was it necessary, except with a few paranoid-homicidal types, to keep from them my disagreements or the fact that what I wrote would in good part be critical.

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THE VILLAGE

Marc D. Schleifer

This is the paradox of Greenwich Village: an historic artists' quarter panders its worst trivia with the civic pride of Zenith's Chamber of Commerce. Nowhere else in New York is the city's ghetto-complex so challenged as by the interracial atmosphere of Village streets and bars, yet it is as difficult for a Negro to rent an apartment in Greenwich Village as in any other white section of the city. The first real estate agent to challenge New York's Fair Housing Practices Law does his business . . . a block from Sheridan Square.

The sources of Village "charm" are found in the twisting streets deflecting the fast through-traffic that has dehumanized the rest of New York, and in the informal life styles of the famous bohemian and Italian settlements. But Village residents have been fighting for years against property interests supporting City Hall proposals to build a major traffic artery through Washington Square Park, and high rents have been driving both bohemians and Italians out of the district.

Still, the Village has held together, bound by the myth of community, a magical urban web supposedly embracing artistic Bohemia and a solid Italian neighborhood. Broken windows and street beatings in Greenwich Village indicate, however, that in recent years even the myth has begun to collapse.

I

Although newspaper coverage did not begin until the latter part of September, 1959, the troubles first became noticeable to Village residents in the summer of that year, when groups of young men from the South Village Italian neighborhood began to harass bohemians. At first most of the incidents were confined to Washington Square Park and the Macdougal-Bleecker Street complex of commercial Bohemia. The New York *Times* reported that many Village establishments were approached by gang members who promised protection at the classic 25 per cent rate. But Village violence, though aggravated by the gangsters, cannot be dismissed as a shakedown operation.

When word got back to the Station House that the neighborhood boys were roughing up Negroes with white girl friends, the police went into action. Increasing the number of men assigned to the district and enforcing a strict midnight curfew in Washington Square Park, the cops began a systematic campaign to harass Village haunts. During the Summer coffee shops staging poetry readings were fined as cabarets operating without a license, until a Magistrate ruled that "the readings did not constitute entertainment in any general sense of the word." By the Fall bars favored by bohemians and interracial couples

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were being carefully watched for violations of fire laws on the usual standing-room-only week-end nights; the managers of these establishments suddenly became very cautious about serving tender-faced customers.

The police showed little respect for the nuances separating bohemian cafes. One Sunday afternoon in early October they stormed into the distinctly non-beatnik Cafe Figaro, located on Bleecker and Macdougal Streets, and broke up a Bach concert by the Silvermine Trio. Again the issue was entertainment without a cabaret license. Again a Magistrate dismissed the charge.

The following month's spectacular "Village Dope Raid" that won Narcotics Squad Commander Edward F. Carey front-page headlines was the high point of the police campaign. Carey carefully placed a cast of detectives disguised as beatniks in the "sinister" coffee houses of Macdougal and Bleecker. What was surprising about this raid is that, compared to other municipalities, the New York police are fairly tolerant about the widespread use of marijuana in Manhattan. The most reasonable explanation for their usual indifference is the "New York Mayor's Report on Marijuana" (assembled during the La Guardia administration), which declares marijuana to be a harmless, non-addictive agent. Nevertheless, "Carey's Crusaders" donned their berets.

All this is not just a tale of misdirected energy. The occasional Village artists, the easygoing folk singers, the Macdougal Street beatniks and the interracial couples *do*, in a way, threaten the disintegrating Italian settlement. This threat is felt most keenly by those members of the settlement actively engaged in violence—the young men and adolescents of South Village. It is a threat of sexual liberation, dangling its sweets before the eyes of the repressed "tough" or of the guilt-stricken hood seeking an easy "lay" yet wanting to marry a virgin. It is a threat that will not be discussed in the *Times* and is carefully avoided by liberals who revel in community discussions of "the Village problem" (just as Eleanor Roosevelt dismissed as "horrible" Norman Mailer's comment that the right to miscegnate is the real issue in racial conflict).

The Village bohemian and Italian are members of two disintegrating settlements, but they still share an extremism in their respective social views, by contrast with the new Village settlers. The sexual revolution has matured within Bohemia since the self-conscious pioneering of Edna St. Vincent Millay and the flapper loves of Max Bodenheim. Since the twenties Bohemia has gained collective insight from Freudo-Marxism, D. H. Lawrence, Wilhelm Reich, the anarchists, and the hipster.

As for the remnants of the Italian settlement, we can only assume that those families which have chosen to remain in South Village have done so out of free choice and, despite changes in the neighborhood and higher rents, out of fierce loyalty to the style of their ethnic group. Assuming this, and with the knowledge that most of the original immigrants were there involuntarily (for reasons of language, poverty and fear of discrimination), I would conjecture that the South Village Italian group, now lower middle class, is more sexually repressed today than it was fifty years ago.

The free association of interracial couples is the most obvious or visible symbol of bohemian sexual liberation

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—and as such, to the already socially and politically insecure Italian community, the most offensive.

II

A case also exists for the theory that the recent violence is a natural reaction of the Italian settlement to the threat of bohemian "cultural imperialism." Many of the crowded cafe houses where self-proclaimed beatniks assemble were Italo-American grocery stores or quiet neighborhood expresso and pinochle clubs only a few years ago. A local family taking its customary summer stroll in Washington Square Park after attending the noon mass at the Church of Our Lady of Pompeii might easily be offended by the hundreds of high-spirited folk singers who gather around the Park on Sunday afternoons. But this theory fails, I think, because it accepts the myth of a Village community.

The existence of any "settlement," ethnic or social in character, can only be measured in terms of residence; a concentration of French restaurants in Manhattan's West Fifties does not presuppose a thriving Gallic-American community. Population studies reported by Vassar sociologist Caroline Ware (*Greenwich Village 1920–1930*) and more recent material gathered by the Greenwich Village Study Group establish that the numerical strength of the Italian Village community has been steadily declining. Admittedly, it is difficult to classify such a social abstraction as bohemianism in a statistical survey. This, perhaps, is one of the virtues of Bohemia. But persons familiar with the Village have reported a progressive decline in the availability of housing that the typical bohemian either prefers or can afford. The posh duplexes of West Village were yesterday's studios, and Greenwich Village Study reports show that the celebrated cheap cold-water Village flats are today non-existent. Over the years they have been replaced by upper-income apartment houses. When the Narcotics Squad staged its comic-opera "dope raid," its month-long infiltration netted thirteen marijuana smokers and a pound of pot. None of the suspects resided in the Village.

The establishments remaining in the Village are under constant pressure. "Circle In the Square," one of the oldest off-Broadway houses in operation, was evicted from Sheridan Square (classically, the geographic center of Greenwich Village) to make way for a new apartment house; it then relocated on Bleecker Street. The increased concentration of coffee houses on Macdougal and Bleecker Streets can be traced partly to the conversion of inexpensive haunts along Fourth Street into solid middle-class restaurants. Apart from scattered dance studios and a few small bookstores, all that remains in the way of old bohemian institutions is concentrated in the Macdougal and Bleecker Street complex. However, most of the coffee houses—especially the more recent ones advertising beatnik poetry—are supported by a clientele about as bohemian as the patrons of the latest "authentic" Chinatown restaurant are Chinese.

Whether the coffee houses are semi-nightclubs featuring poets on display to the tourist trade, or quiet little places for the chess, checker and *Go* crowd, their extension into the "solid" Italian neighborhood of South Village has not displaced Italian community life. For the integrity of the community had long before started to crumble. Residential relocation has created a situation where a "bohemian" enterprise is more profitable than one suited

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to the supposed needs of the old Italian neighborhood. The fashionable "Garden Apartments" further west on Bleecker Street and the growing number of high-rent modern apartment houses built in the last few years within the heart of the Italian settlement —these and not the coffee houses that have replaced Italo-American grocery stores are responsible for the shifting character of the neighborhood.

Nor have members of the old Italian community been kept from using Washington Square Park by an invasion of bohemians. The folk singers had gathered in the Circle on Sunday afternoons for over a decade untroubled by neighborhood toughs. In fact, increased police restrictions in the last few years have cut the length of the informal folk concerts. And the park has never been the exclusive domain of the Village Italians. They have shared it for generations with New York University students who consider the lawn their campus, and also with the vanishing "old families" of Lower Fifth Avenue, whose brownstone houses have also made way either for the luxury apartment house or the expansion of N.Y.U. If there has been a Park invasion in recent years, it must be measured in terms of baby carriages, not guitar cases.

III

As early as the twenties Caroline Ware observed the slow influx of a new social group into the Village: young couples and bachelors, professional men and business executives. They were not identifiable by any particular ethnic or religious background as were the earlier German, Irish and Italian settlements in the Village, nor did they work in the community—as did many members of the bohemian and immigrant settlements. Their involvement was as spectators, in line with their desire for a cultured middle-class life. Their social and political attitudes were "liberal" but untouched by the radicalism of Bohemia. They were involved with their own families but lacked the deep-rooted community ties and taboos of the immigrant groups. The first modern Village apartment houses were constructed for them; they were the patrons of the earliest supermarkets in the district. The arrival of this New Settlement might be described as the *suburbanization of Greenwich Village.*

In the last few years the slow influx has turned into a residential flood; new apartment houses rise steadily. Changing Village institutions and community power struggles have reflected the growing power of the New Settlement.

For the last few decades the district was serviced solely by a weekly newspaper called *The Villager.* Featuring local advertising, it devotes its small segment of news space to accounts of social events in the churches and clubs of the Lower Fifth Avenue "old families" and the South Village Italian community. In addition to a column listing the names of "prominent" diners at those restaurants that regularly advertise, the paper carries mild news reports on Village politics, praising the civic accomplishments of Carmine De Sapio's Tamawa Club. It is sold chiefly for the benefit of apartment hunters, who traditionally rely on *Villager* classifieds.

Five years ago a new and competing weekly, *The Village Voice,* appeared in the community. The *Voice* has rapidly picked up a paid circulation of over 17,000 and won considerable power in the community. Its comprehensive off-Broadway theater-reviewing, intense news coverage and editorial

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comment on local controversies, literate profiles of Village personalities in politics and the arts, and occasional art, music and literary criticism make for a strange amalgam of *New Yorker* sophistication and *New York Post* "crusading liberalism." With the brief exception of Norman Mailer's pieces expounding Hip, which appeared in the first months of the paper's existence, and other occasional radical contributions, *The Voice* has no real connection with either the remnant of prewar Village radicalism or with the "Beat Generation's" literary dissent in the fifties. Although *The Voice* still hankers after the same local advertisers who support *The Villager*, the paper has done exceptionally well with national advertisers, devoting special issues to the promotion of hi-fi equipment, sports cars and world travel—all indices of the life style or expectations of the average *Voice* reader.

More important than the rise of *The Voice* in terms of New Settlement power has been the growth of the Village Independent Democrats, one of the many insurgent "liberal reform" clubs in Manhattan. In recent primaries, when Carmine De Sapio barely beat off the VID candidate, his tiny margin was provided by heavy majorities in the South Village Italian election districts. During the bitter primary campaign, the De Sapio forces whipped the Italian community into a frenzied state, presenting it with a simple alternative: "Us or them." As a campaign slogan, this ethnic appeal was an example of political desperation; but judged as a statement of the real question of power, it was the only issue at stake in the election. For VID's demonstration of strength in the primary established the New Settlement's actual community dominance.

Resentful of the decline of its political power, the once secure Italian settlement is further frustrated by an inability to admit the betrayal of its interests by its own leadership. For in recent years the most important factor in the rapidly accelerating transformation of Greenwich Village into a well-to-do dormitory has been the creation of the luxury housing units of Washington Square Village. Publicly financed as a Title I "Slum Clearance" project, Washington Square Village runs the North-South length of the Village Italian settlement and has cut considerably into the unofficial eastern border of the old neighborhood. The promoter of Washington Square Village, Morton S. Wolf, is known to be one of Carmine De Sapio's major financial backers. The law firm that represents Washington Square Village, Goldwater and Flynn, is generally considered to be the legal arm of the New York Democratic organization. Village wits refer to the project as "Tammany Towers."

When the present site of the project was first proposed for slum clearance action in the early fifties, large delegations from the Village Italian community flocked to City Hall to protest. City officials selected by De Sapio assured the delegations that the City would not earmark any more sections of South Village for slum clearance. Nevertheless, Washington Square Village continued to be involved in controversy throughout the fifties. To justify the "Fifth Avenue South" address promised to the project's backers, City officials proposed extending Lower Fifth Avenue through Washington Square Park. The proposed roadway would have split the Park in half, reduced usable park space and further threatened the district's insularity.

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For five years, groups of residents protested the roadway proposals. As a counter to the City plan, Villagers advocated complete closure of the existing roadway through the Park. In the Spring of 1958 the various organizations formed a Joint Emergency Committee to conduct a full-scale pressure campaign on the City and Borough administrations. After a year of City Hall hearings, rallies, a 50,000 signature petition campaign and political threats against De Sapio, the Committee succeeded in forcing City Hall to reverse its position and initiate the road-closing proposals. Most volunteers and organizational support for the Committee came from such New Settlement institutions as private school PTA's, VID, and *The Voice*.

An opinion poll and the subsequent block-by-block canvassing in the petition drive revealed that public sentiment for the Committee's position was strong *throughout* the district, yet none of the Italian settlement's civic and fraternal organizations (whose leaders are almost all identified with De Sapio's Tamawa Club) would participate on the Committee; most, in fact, took public positions opposing the road-closure proposal.

The irony that the roadway, conceived as an encouragement to the promoters of more high-density housing for New Settlement residents, should be violently opposed by the existing New Settlement as detrimental to the charm that brought *them* to the Village was no doubt lost on most members of the Committee. The paradox in this situation for the Italian settlement is less humorous. Direct and derivative profits from real estate speculation are apparently vast enough for De Sapio and his closest associates to acquiesce in a development necessarily leading to the eventual loss of their political power in the district.

The targets of an understandable resentment that has built up in recent years among members of the disintegrating Italian settlment seem obvious enough. But they are "impossible" targets. Somehow, weaker men, however innocent, have always been found to pay for the suffering of a threatened insular group.

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THE POLITICS OF VIRTUE, OR, THE NEW TAMMANY

Mary Peret Nichols

Wherever enough middle class college graduates can be found to fill a New York meeting hall, there have sprung up Democratic political clubs bearing the label "reform." Many of these clubs were originally founded as local campaign headquarters for Adlai Stevenson because the "regular" organization was cool to his candidacy. But it was only after the 1958 State Convention, where Tammany leader Carmine DeSapio affronted liberal Democrats like Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and former Governor Herbert Lehman by rejecting their candidate for U. S. Senator, that the "movement" took on some militancy. Prior to Buffalo the older reformers had considered it okay to do business with DeSapio; certainly Governor Lehman had found no fault with him. Afterward, however, the Tammany boss became the chief target of the local clubs, newly inspired by the ancient liberal stalwarts. Behind the scenes, of course, a certain amount of trading between the "reformers" and DeSapio continued.

Previous reforms of Tammany (there have been several) have vanished into the footnotes of history books. The great error into which middle-class reformers have fallen is the belief that Tammany is really a Hall, and that all "us good guys" have to do is take it over. But Tammany, as history shows, is not a hall; it is a state of mind.

The Tammany spirit is to get power by all means, fair or foul, and to use it to get at the spoils. It is a way of taking over the machinery of government for the benefit of those who make a living by working at it 365 days a year, in other words, the "pros." In a one-party city like New York, the "pros" are able to make a tidy living by selling special privileges to special interests. The question all reformers must face, therefore, is not whether they will take over Tammany but whether Tammany will take them over. The incentives to corruption in a city as wealthy as New York are enormous. And in a city so large and with a governmental structure so complex, the devices for covering up corruption by making the processes of government totally confusing are unlimited.

I

A lion's share of the publicity and a substantial amount of the money used in the local district campaigns against DeSapio and his

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old-line supporters comes from a nationally oriented group known as the "liberal fat cats." These persons, high up in business, the communications industry and corporation law firms, were important supporters of Stevenson in his two presidential campaigns. The "fat cats" are largely centered in Manhattan's Silk Stocking District dominated by the Lexington Democratic Club. Before the 1960 Los Angeles Democratic convention, they fought desperately to undercut the national influence DeSapio would have had as Democratic National Committeeman. In some measure they succeeded—at least in making the Tammany leader a nationally controversial figure and in bringing home to him that his troubles stemmed from ignoring their advice at Buffalo.

The young people in the district clubs do not entirely share the aims of the men on the top level of the reform movement. The club members were also attracted by Stevenson, but even more by the glamor of jousting with the forces of evil—embodied in the Tammany Tiger. In the best Stevensonian tradition, however, they hardly recognize the joust as a struggle for power. If the top level leaders desert the movement, perhaps to take patronage positions in the Kennedy administration, Tammany may well be left intact, except for the "new look" given it by the admission of a few young leaders in Brooks Brothers suits. One reform leader in Manhattan, already taken over and in by a Tammanyite turned self-styled reformer, was overheard mumbling as he disappeared into the jaws of the Tiger, "How like a Dostoevsky novel!"

The "reform" movement calls itself an effort "to revitalize the Democratic Party." Its chief spokesman, other than the ancient "Big Three" of Lehman, Roosevelt and Finletter, is a 68-year-old real estate lawyer named Irving Engel. Mr. Engel deals in "high-level" gibberish designed to enthuse and confuse the new people the reform movement hopes to attract to the Democratic Party. Says Mr. Engel, "We believe that our party must be in a position to attract to its standard all who are concerned with *good government* (italics ours). The party organization must regain its former health and dynamism [Is this what Tammany had?] if it is to play a successful role in critical elections."

Mr. Engel goes on to say that the Democratic Party "must shake off the image and actuality of bossism and regain public confidence through its presentation of vigorous and progressive candidates and its advocacy of thoughtful and effective programs." What these programs are, and, indeed, where these candidates are, Mr. Engel has so far failed to say.

One reformer has argued that "a conscious decision has been made to win control of the machine first, before there is any discussion of program." On this point, Liberal Party leaders have pointed out that "These people don't know what they want . . . once they start discussing issues they will fall apart." (The Liberal Party has good reason to snipe at the reform Democrats since many Liberal rank and file members have left to join the apparently more lively Democrats.) It would seem, for example, that discussions between former Police Commissioner Francis Adams of the top level of reformers and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt would

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become somewhat sticky if they were include Adams's passion for fingerprinting school teachers.

II

In the local reform clubs no clear-cut decision has been made as to the purpose of a political club. For each member or voter in the district, the club means something different. For some a political club is a health station to dispense polio shots (a continuation of the service offered by Tammany clubs to their districts), for others it is a group therapy session where everyone gets a chance to "express himself," a friendship or a Golden Age Club. For still others it is a town meeting where forums are held on the issues of the day—most often on issues which have little to do with the city or the neighborhood—or a civic organization where one can work for some abstract notion of "good government." If some of the busy and anxious participants were to discover that their "reform" clubhouses were simply more modern versions of the old Tammany clubhouses, cogs in a larger machine known as "The Organization," there would be a falling away overnight of some of the more idealistic activists. To those who are active for a simpler reason, that is, self-advancement in the political world, the problem is merely how to retain the "reform" facade while getting rid of all the busybodies who insist on becoming involved in the club's decision-making.

In some of the so-called "reform" clubs in Manhattan, the business of getting rid of the "troublemakers" is already well in hand. Such members find themselves constantly confronted by *fait accompli*—including, perhaps, a vote in the Tammany Executive Committee for Carmine DeSapio by their club's leaders. After a few skirmishes with the leadership, they lose interest and take off for civic organizations or church groups where they probably belong in the first place. A person who has gone into politics because he learned somewhere, from his local Chamber of Commerce, school or church, that it is one's civic duty to *participate,* often finds that his activity in the reform club is leading to none of the ends he thought he had entered politics to achieve.

One ex-member of the Village Independent Democrats, a clubhouse that directly faces Carmine DeSapio's own Tamawa Club, recently referred to the reform club in the following terms: "There are so many people on white horses up there that you have to kick away the manure to get into the place." What he meant was that so much meeting time was taken up with procedural questions, reforms of party rules, the pros and cons of patronage, all discussed on a high moral plane, that the issues which really concerned him were hardly ever discussed. And, in fact, the new clubs have had little to say about housing, schools, the problems facing narcotics addicts and so forth.

Most of the young Democratic reformers lack any real passion for social reform. It is perhaps not surprising since so few members of the reform clubs are anything but middle class: public relations and law are the dominating professions in the clubs. There is almost no working-class

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support—possibly because no one considers himself working class except the Puerto Ricans and the Negroes and they have little relation to the reform movement. A Puerto Rican hotel worker who has to get up at 6:00 A.M. can have little taste for meetings on party structure which proceed heatedly until one or two in the morning.

One might go further and say that the middle class reformers lack not only a passion for social reform; but also a passion for self-preservation—that is, as residents of the city. It is the middle classes in New York who are essentially unrepresented. It is they who most often make an effort to send their children to private schools or to move to the suburbs, rather than fight back as any self-respecting minority might. It is the middle classes in the city for whom the housing shortage is becoming increasingly desperate because they have allowed themselves to be persuaded that government subsidies for them are not "liberal" (a term which they find respectable), but really quite "radical." In the clubhouses, of course, the middle class professionals are socially akin to the "enlightened" real estate men many of whom have also become "reformers." And indeed the PR men and the lawyers quite frequently get their business from the "enlightened" real estate men.

There is, then, an absence in the reform movement of a mature civic idealism. While this is unfortunate for the future of local government, it clearly suits the top level leaders of the movement who are playing for much higher stakes. Besides their national aspirations, the men at the top have local business interests which are often in conflict with the need for better schools and housing. Without an ideology to contend with that is rooted in neighborhood and city-wide problems, all these men have to do when they have achieved their own ends is to take away the money, the respectability, and the glamor of national publicity. The chances are that the great crusade would rapidly dwindle into the New Tammany.

III

All this is not to say that the Democratic reform movement has been a waste of time. Not at all. The mountain has labored and has already brought forth a small number of very nice mice. Reform clubs have had a beneficial effect on some neighborhoods simply by providing a political opposition to the old-line Tammany Club. For example, it is unlikely that Carmine DeSapio would ever have used his great power to oppose Robert Moses's plans for a superhighway through Washington Square Park if he had not been put in political jeopardy by the Village Independent Democrats. The Village, partly because of its unique political situation as DeSapio's home district, has also managed to obtain a special zoning amendment to preserve the character of its side streets, and no real estate speculator dared raise his head in opposition.

One could go through the neighborhoods where reform clubs exist and point to the improvements—new traffic lights put up, street widenings stopped, even, in one case, a Title I project stymied by exposure of scandal during a hard-fought primary. Today, many regular Demo-

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cratic clubs are nervous about making political fixes which their local opposition might find out about and use in the next primary. In political controversy, it appears, there is benefit for the average citizen.

The Democratic reformers have been notably unsuccessful, however, in maintaining any meaningful contact with the ever-increasing Negro and Puerto-Rican populations. While these ethnic groups do not quite fit into the old Christmas basket category (today they want something less patronizing: e.g., a slice of the patronage pie), their concept of politics is conditioned by their economic circumstances. How can a middle class reformer who is agitating for the abolition of patronage sit down for a discussion with Adam Clayton Powell who says "we want one out of every three jobs"? In fact, the influx of the Negro and Puerto Rican populations and the dwindling of the middle class among whom there is some feeling that political activity is a moral obligation may make the whole reform idea academic within a few years.

Finally, there may be one unfortunate consequence of the reform movement: this burst of energetic but thus far unsuccessful activity in the Democratic Party may well give Tammany Hall a patina of respectability and actually help get it past the next mayoralty election. At this writing it appears that the "liberal fat cats" at the top of the reform movement have effectively prevented the reform movement from going too far. Governor Lehman has managed to hold the lid on the city-wide reform movement, despite vigorous rank-and-file protests, in order to give the lackluster administration of Mayor Robert P. Wagner a "reform" label. It appears that the top level of the reform group is already reaping the rewards it sought through a little anti-Tammany trouble-making: e.g., the rich liberals have managed to advertise to future DeSapios that some attention must be paid to them—or else! A new generation of "reform" real estate men are inheriting Title I goodies. High jobs in Washington and in New York City have been handed out or are in the offing for the top "reformers." And under the guise of "reform," good local government under Fusion, the only method by which New York City has achieved a good administration, has been effectively blocked.

It is clear that the "vigorous and progressive candidates" and "the thoughtful and effective programs" of which Mr. Engel boasted, are mere political hogwash.

Or as Tammany seer George Washington Plunkitt once mused: "The only reason I can imagine why more men don't go into this industry is because they don't know about it. And just here it strikes me that it might not be wise to publish what I've said. Perhaps if it gets to be known what a snap this manufacture of 'Democracies' is, all the green-goods men, the bunco-steerers, and the young Napoleons of finance will go into it and the public will be humbugged more than it has been."

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HARLEM TODAY

Michael Harrington

"Then it was time for the movie and we all went in to this little movie and saw a movie about America. It show rivers an factories & farms & mountains & a workinman in a blue shirt buying socks. Flash Gordon he was sittin in front of me slash the back of the seat and all the stuffin started fallin out. An Lonsome Pine unscrewed the arm of his chair with a dime. When the lights went on we made a lot of noise and Mister Shapiro hussled us out an never noticed the damage."—The Cool World, *by Warren Miller.*

In some ways Harlem is different. It is not the solidest or the best organized Negro community (Negro political representation came to Chicago a full decade before New York). It is not the most depressed, even in the New York area—that honor belongs to Bedford-Stuyvesant over in Brooklyn. But Harlem is a Negro capital, much as New York is an unofficial American capital. Harlem is big, teeming and brassy. It is where Marcus Garvey established the center of his Empire-in-Exile, where Joe Louis was cheered after he knocked out Max Schmeling, where Fidel Castro came after the Cuban Revolution.

Finally, however, Harlem is much the same as any other Negro ghetto. It exists in the midst of a city where liberal rhetoric is required for election to public office. There is no legal segregation; there is a Fair Employment Practices law, a State Commission Against Discrimination, a municipal Open Occupancy law. And nevertheless, as everyone knows, the white man is still way ahead.

To live in Harlem is to be a Negro; to be a Negro is to be subjected to a culture of poverty and fear which cuts far deeper than any law concerning discrimination. In this sense, Harlem could well be a warning: that after the racist statutes are all struck down, after legal equality has been achieved in the schools and the courts, there will yet remain the profound, institutionalized and abiding wrong which white America has worked on the Negro for centuries.

Like the young Negroes of *The Cool World,* Harlem watches all the wonderful movies about America with a certain bitter cynicism.

I

"If the population density in some of Harlem's worst blocks obtained in the rest of New York City, the entire population of the

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United States could fit into three of New York's boroughs"—Civil Rights Commission, 1959.

First the statistics: grim, dreary and predictable.

In the mid-fifties (the last point for which figures are available), there were almost one million Negroes in New York. In this group, 50 per cent of the families had incomes under $4000 a year (as compared with 20 per cent of the white families). Negroes formed the majority of persons receiving Home Relief and Aid to Dependent Children—and they made up 40 per cent of all the people getting public assistance. Negro unemployment in the city was somewhat more than double that of the whites, and wages were around half of what the white workers got. This affected every other aspect of life: in 1959, the infant mortality rate in Central Harlem was 45.3 per thousand; the lowest rate in a white New York district was 15.4 per thousand.

The figures could be piled on and on, but the point is obvious: Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant are centers of poverty, of sickness, of unemployment, of suffering. But the statistics tend to mask the miserable reality because they deal with measurable things. And the fact of Harlem is often intangible, a matter of the culture of poverty rather than of its income and housing indices.

There is, for example, fear, the imminence of The Man.

When I was preparing this essay, I was walking around Harlem with a notebook. I stopped on Lenox Avenue to take down some prices in the window of a barbecue joint. When I looked up, everyone was watching me. Knowing what they thought, I turned to the two men nearest me and said, "I'm not a cop." When I walked over and started to tell them that I was a writer, one accepted the story. The other listened for a moment and then said, "I still think he's from the police." Then they were gone.

To be white is to be The Man. In Harlem where the numbers game is still a community pastime, where streetwalking still flourishes on 125th Street, and where marijuana is easily come by, that is natural enough. But it goes even deeper than the immediate and practical concern of an area that has more than its share of illegality. It is the result of a long experience, of a wise and inbred fear of the cop and the finance man and practically every other white (except the welfare worker who *can* be a source of help).

For all its noise and brashness, its ubiquitous rhythms of rock-'n'-roll, Harlem is afraid. And for good reason. The white has been The Man; and in many, many cases, he still is.

This fear is on the very surface of Harlem life. It also may be a deep and important part of what has been done to the Negro by white America. The question always arises; does the Negro want out, does this group have as much aspiration and drive as others? The whole issue can be posed simply by comparing the streets of Negro Harlem with those of Spanish Harlem where the Puerto Ricans live.

Walking down 125th Street, one quickly comes to see that Harlem's

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economy is white. Practically all of the stores are presided over by white men, and this has been true for years. During the fierce Harlem riot in World War II, popular rage was directed against these shops. When the proprietor (or salesmen, rent agent, or numbers boss) is Jewish, this becomes a traditional source of Negro anti-Semitism. The most recent variations on this theme are played by Muslim orators who relate it to a pro-Arab, anti-Israel line.

In any Puerto-Rican section of New York the situation is quite different, for almost as soon as the Puerto Ricans arrive, Spanish-speaking shops dot the avenue. This was true even before the big migration of Puerto Ricans in the post-war period. Writing on Harlem in 1940, Claude McKay traced this pattern all the way back to the twenties when the Puerto Ricans lived only on the fringe of Harlem.

Why is there this difference? Does the Negro, because of his humiliation in white America, lack the aspirations of the national groups who come in from the outside? One of the best answers to this question (and a complete answer is still not possible) has been given by the sociologist, Nathan Glazer, who writes that the problem is that the Negro lives too close to white society, yet segregated from it. He is neither of the society, nor out of it. He participates in the consumption cult (the Negro is an "exaggerated American" Myrdal said; Harlem is Hollywood carried to its logical conclusion, the poet Thomas Merton wrote), yet he is desperately and often hopelessly poor. In our self-proclaimed society of affluence, he has the worst of all worlds.

Related to this is the fact that the Negro community in the North is not even a generation removed from Southern backwardness. The Puerto Rican comes from an island in which his countrymen increasingly run stores and manage offices. The Negro in Harlem, as Ralph Ellison has written of him, is often "shot up from the South into the busy city like wild jacks-in-the-box broken loose from our springs—so sudden that our gait becomes like that of deep-sea divers suffering from the bends."

Another way of dealing with this aspect of Harlem life is suggested by Norman Mailer's image of the White Negro: that the Negro, always threatened with the violence of white society, develops a defense mechanism of coolness, of hip, a sort of passive protest, a cautious kind of disaffiliation. Mailer over-generalizes his point, yet he catches the importance of fear in Harlem, and its role in the political economy of Negro poverty.

THESE EXPLANATIONS rest on a common assumption: that the aspiration, or lack of it, among the Negroes of Harlem is the result of what white America has done. The point becomes obvious when one thinks of the Harlem schools. A welfare worker in Harlem puts it in human terms. The children, he said, are very proud when they first come to school. They show off their books, they are interested, they are friendly with white teachers. But then, in a few years, they learn. The schools are crowded, the instruction is inferior (there are more substitute teachers

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in Harlem than anywhere else), the neighborhood is omnipresent and more powerful than the classroom. Their aspiration is beaten out of them by the system, by the structure of discrimination in liberal New York.

Yet now, for the first time, there may be developing a new direction. In the years of relative postwar prosperity, a larger middle class is coming into existence in Harlem and in the Negro world in general. It is composed of politicians and professionals, of Civil Servants (one of the traditional areas of Negro access to some decent jobs), even of union organizers. This group has a fierce desire to move, to change—a lawyer in Harlem is still likely to be introduced as "Attorney so and so"—and to break into American life. Yet even this class bears the frightful marks of segregation. It cannot house itself as a middle class, it is still part of the Negro culture of poverty—even though it has money.

The Supreme Court decision of May, 1954, and the growth of a mass Civil Rights movement may also be a crucial element in breaking the old pattern. Kenneth Clark writes, "Consciously or unconsciously, and no matter how much we might rebel against it, we all had accepted the fact of second-class status . . . [After the decision] for the first time the Negro *felt* that he was a man in his own right and that his government would help him prove it." If this is the case, and there is evidence that it is, then the most profound implication of the Supreme Court decision deals not so much with equality before the law but with beginning a reversal of the old Negro psychology.

II

"Bledsoe, you're a shameless chitterling eater! I accuse you of relishing hog bowels!"—The Invisible Man, *by Ralph Ellison.*

One of the old stereotypes is, like almost every stereotype, a part truth. Harlem is brassy, rocking and rolling. The Negro prostitutes on 125th Street are much better looking than the white girls who come up to work the same block. At the Apollo, there is some of the most uninhibited carrying-on to be found in a public place in New York. ("Why man," a friend said, "if they did that in any other part of town, the preachers would have the place closed down in a minute.") In the afternoon, the bars along the big avenues are jammed.

But perhaps Harlem's most obvious difference for the white Northerner is its food. Each group in the United States, each ghetto, is distinctive in the way it eats. (Alfred Kazin has a charming memory in *A Walker in the Streets:* that in Brownsville, at the height of the depression, there was always money for soda or other extras.) In a place like New York, a good many people know the foods of the various nations because of the ghettoes. But practically no one knows the food of Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant.

In a casual walk through Harlem, you will see advertised some of these things: chitterlings, ham knuckles, hog maw, pigs feet, pigs tail, pigs ears—and fish is everywhere. Part of the distance of the Negro from

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white America is expressed in this diet. Ellison's cry—his hero is accusing a prominent Negro of the secret vice of eating chitterlings—is heard in almost every novel of Negro life. In the *Amsterdam News,* a columnist asks, "Has eating hog kept the Race Back?" A friend tells me: Negroes have energy because they eat things the white folks won't touch.

For that matter, there is an advantage to this way of eating. In Los Angeles, a welfare worker remarks that the Negroes live better on relief than the whites. The whites will spend a major portion of their budget on a roast, and then live on spaghetti, or marcaroni or potatoes. The Negroes, with a tradition of cheap foods, have a much more balanced diet, even if it is composed of fat back and greens. The result is that the whites are much more prone to the classic health problems of poverty (overweight, anemia, cardiac) than the Negroes.

But there is no point in making Harlem's food the basis for a new myth of the "happy" Negro. A lot of the children from the poorest families simply breakfast on cold coffee. When asked by a teacher or welfare worker what they ate that morning, the children, recognizing the figure of The Man, will usually reply, "Juice, and bacon and eggs and cereal and milk." But then, that is part of the perennial sparring between the poor and Welfare.

Harlem lives much of its life in the streets. The statistics on Negro unemployment may be abstract and distant; an afternoon block of milling, waiting men is not.

For one thing, most of the rooms in Harlem are so small, dingy, and mean that the bars are always crowded. Everywhere you see men who are just standing. Sometimes there will be a crap game in the street (as soon as a white comes into sight, it will suspend operations with lightning speed); often there will be fights. A lot of the violence of Harlem, or of any slum, is the inevitable result of enforced mass idleness, of life in the streets. On the nicer blocks of Harlem (for the middle class lives in the midst of the poor in a great part of the Negro world), the gutters are not filled with refuse, and there are signs in front of the neat brownstones, "Positively No Loitering Or Sitting On Rail Or Stoop." In every part of its existence, Harlem must deal with unemployment as a permanent condition.

If there are more idle men, there are also more funeral parlors in Harlem than in any part of New York. They seem to be as numerous as the churches and the bars. For the Negro poor, death is often the only moment in life that permits a luxury. Many of the lodges and fraternal orders have death benefit plans. Those who have lived in grinding poverty all their lives, and who are deeply religious, look to dying as a moment of style and status. So it is that the under-developed economy of Harlem supports a ubiquitous industry of death.

Religion is, of course, one of the most obvious things about Harlem. The poor everywhere tend toward spiritualism, the combination of the mystic and frenzied, a release from the misery of this world. For the Negro, for Harlem, this is doubly true. The Church was the one

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really Negro institution which developed under slavery and continues in the Jim Crow South. It is more than religion: it is the meeting place, the moment of freedom and expressiveness.

Some of Harlem's Churches are, like Adam Powell's Abyssinian Baptist, impressive structures. But the more obvious and striking ones are the storefronts, the Islamic centers, the Holy Dove Church of Christ with a picture in the window showing God as a Negro. On 125th Street there is Daddy Grace's second story loft, and on a warm evening, the sound of the meeting spills out rapturously onto the avenue. The sign says: "As Noah Was Before The Flood So Is Daddy Grace Before the Fire." Traditionally middle-class Negroes have tried to disown this fervid, mystic religiosity but they speak only for themselves. The social class of a Negro Church can be ascertained by ear: the higher the class, the less commotion. But as long as the reality of Harlem is as miserable as it is, the religious imagination will soar. These churches are not charming and quaint; their vivid image of the afterlife is simply a passionate inversion of the sordid present.

The Muslims are part of this tradition, but in a different way. They have the same intensity, but with more violence. Their fantasy is not of a great Beyond, but of a colored world in the here and now. It is a political and religious utopia which moves them, a response to the frustrations of a discriminatory society, a curse upon the tokenism of integration in the United States. They hate deeply: the middle-class leaders of the Civil Rights movement, the Jewish shopkeepers (anti-Semitism is a persistent Muslim theme), the world of white America. At the same time, they have a certain pride and forcefulness. The young Muslim is likely to be one of the neatest, most carefully groomed men on the street.

The Muslims are a minority in Harlem. Their street meetings never even approach the size of the mass rallies of the mainstream Civil Rights movement. Yet they strike a nerve. Harry Ashmore writes in *The Other Side of Jordan* that the ordinary man on Harlem's street will not join the Muslims, but feels a certain satisfaction when he hears his deepest hates and fears made articulate. Paradoxically, this is much more true in the North than in an embattled Negro community in the South. In Birmingham or Atlanta or Shreveport, the Negro community is under great pressure, but it is moving, walking, fighting back. In New York, where all the official rhetoric is anti-discrimination and the unofficial reality is segregation, membership in the NAACP means paying two dollars a year and not much more. By contrast, the Muslims appeal to the sense of violent desperation many Negroes feel in regard to the present, and the measureless yearning in regard to the future.

This Muslim appeal also relates to the political fortunes of Harlem. The Negro arrived at Tammany Hall in the late thirties—when Tammany's power was on the decline and Democratic Party leadership meant less than it had in the past. Since then, there has been a steady gain in the appearance of Negro political strength—Adam Powell's Congressional seat, the Borough Presidency of Manhattan, in effect a "Negro" office, and so on—while very little has changed in the life of Harlem. In this

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case, the Negro is probably the victim of the general muddle of politics in New York, as James Wilson argues in his *Negro Politics.*

BUT IF THE STRUCTURE of Harlem politics is that of an independent Democratic barony with much less power than it claims, the leading figure of its political life, Adam Clayton Powell, is a figure rich with implication. To begin with, Powell is a minister and his political position rests, in part, on a Church constituency of well over 10,000 members. He is an intransigeant, a demagogue, a rogue—and unquestionably one of the most popular Negro leaders one can find. In recent years he has defied the Democratic leadership in New York, bolted the national ticket to Eisenhower, and been the center of more scandal, law suits and general gossip than any ten other Negroes in the United States.

To be sure, Powell has a certain kind of effectiveness. He is not a conservative, machine politician like Congressman Dawson of Chicago. On the race issue, his very flamboyance sometimes achieves results. But he is also a politician who thrives on backwardness; an absentee Congressman, an erratic leader, a sort of a Negro James Michael Curley, loyal to the group and with an air of gay corruption.

One story which Powell has been said to tell of himself reveals the poverty of Negro politics in Harlem as of a piece with all the rest of the poverty there. Some candidate had taken on the impossible task of trying to unseat Powell. He was speaking at a street meeting and, the legend goes, Powell was parked in a car on the fringe of the crowd. "Adam Powell," he said, "is a Congressman and a minister. But he has an apartment in New York, and a place in Washington, and he's seen in night clubs, and he travels to Europe all the time, and he's hardly ever in the Congress." From the crowd someone yelled, "Man, that's really living."

The story is funny enough, but at bottom it is made of the same stuff as Amos 'n' Andy: the laughing, childlike, pleasure-loving Negro who must be patronized and taken care of. For all of the vigor of Powell, and of Negro politics in Harlem, this is part of the tragedy of racism, too.

BECAUSE HARLEM is Negro, it is poor. White America long ago enforced that equation, and it gives to Negro poverty its special characteristic, it makes the breakthrough even more difficult. Because Harlem is poor, it is Negro, that is, it exhibits qualities of hopelessness, of passivity, of acceptance that ignorant or malicious people try to ascribe to the "nature" of the Negro. To do something about Harlem—to unlock the "keyless aviaries" of its high buildings (the phrase is Thomas Merton's) —is not simply a matter of Civil Rights, of equality before the law. It goes much deeper than that, it requires an attack on a culture of discrimination and poverty, on the consequences of over a century of oppression.

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HARLEM, MY HARLEM

Claude Brown

At the age of nine I had already acquired the reputation of being the worst boy in the neighborhood. And in my neighborhood this was no easy accomplishment. My frequent appearance in juvenile court was beginning to bother the judges. By spring of 1946 I had been placed in four juvenile detention centers by the Manhattan Domestic Relations Court. However, during my travels through New York City while truant from school, I had become exceptionally well acquainted with the city subways. As a result, I was usually back on the streets of Harlem within two days, from wherever the court had placed me. A year earlier, I had acquired the habit of staying away from home for several days and nights which occasionally lengthened into weeks. Due to my skill at living in the streets, it would sometimes be many days before my parents learned of my unofficial departure from the places to which I had been confined by the courts.

While roaming the streets at night with one or two other boys who were also afraid to go home or disgusted with home life, I was often arrested for breaking into stores and stealing. I only stole items that I could sell to my private customers or to one of the neighborhood "fences." And I knew a large number of the latter. Among my many customers and associates were prostitutes, pimps, dope peddlers, stick-up artists, professional thieves, and other petty criminals with great ambitions.

My favorite fence was Miss Eileen. She was not the highest paying fence; in fact, there is no such thing. Any thief will tell you, they are all a bunch of crooks. But Miss Eileen had such a nice way of robbing me. She would put her arm around me and beg me in a very sexy tone while she played with my ears. I thought she was the prettiest lady in the world. I think she was the first woman I ever knew who had red hair. Miss Eileen was also something more than a fence, and I would have discovered this much sooner had it not been for my youth. Many times when I came to her house at night she would be in her slip and a new husband would be there. As time went on I heard the older fellows talking about selling Miss Eileen something for a "piece of loving." I too began to dream of the day when I could sell her something for a piece of loving, but to my regret I never got the chance. A year later Miss Eileen went to jail for three years, and when she came out she wasn't as pretty as she used to be. As a result, she changed her "game" to selling drugs. For three years she was very successful in the "horse trade," but gave it up and did seven years for her troubles at the insistence of the Narcotics Bureau. The last time I saw her she was profitably engaged in one of

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Harlem's more legal vices; the "numbers" racket.

These were the people I admired and wanted to be accepted by. People like Miss Eileen and my other teachers from the streets of Harlem.

By June 1946 I had been expelled from not less than six public schools in New York City, and refused acceptance by as many others. The Board of Education would tolerate my numerous absences from school, and even my fighting with teachers. But they refused to have a boy in the school system who had attempted to push another boy out of a five-story window.

Following a thirty-day psychiatric observation period in Bellevue Hospital, I was ordered out of the state by a juvenile court judge. After enduring what seemed at the time a miserable year on a small farm in South Carolina, I returned to New York. When I arrived in Harlem on August 10, 1947 I was also returning to a familiar way of life. Less than two months later I was standing before Judge Bolyn diligently trying to look pathetic. She appeared to be a woman devoid of any emotions, especially pity. From Judge Bolyn, to whom I am deeply indebted today, I received my first sentence.

My first court sentence was actually not a sentence at all, but a commitment to Wiltwyck School for Boys for an indefinite time.

Wiltwyck is an interracial institution which accepts delinquent boys from eight to twelve, committed by the courts of New York or by social agencies. Only children are considered who can profit by its program of individualized treatment in the regulated and planned environment of a children's community.

Following a two and a half years stay at Wiltwyck, I returned to my dear old Harlem. I was then thirteen. In a few weeks I became uncomfortably aware of not being able to fit in anymore. There were many new vices to learn, but somehow I just could not pick up where I had left off. Having no alternative, however, I set out to reestablish myself in the old community.

Things were somewhat different now. The dope fad had hit New York, and all of my old gang were using heroin. I wanted nothing to do with drugs, but the problem was very disturbing. Either I could continue my relationship with my old cohorts or get in with a younger gang of delinquents, my own age. The younger group was stealing and making much less money than my former partners. I would have chosen my old friends, but I was handicapped by parental restrictions. So I became leader of a gang of fellows mostly my own age. There were many things I could teach them, such as how to pick locks, how to rob a subway slot machine, how to pick a woman's pocketbook, how to bargain with the "fence," and how to roll "pot." Also, I knew how to organize a gang fight and hold a gang together.

I didn't have to steal for money, because Butch, Kidd, and Danny were doing good, "pushing horse," and money was mine for the asking. I think they preferred that I steal it from them. So, that's how I usually got it. Butch, Kidd, and Danny were all at least four years older than I was, and for many years we had all lived in the same tenement building. These guys whom I considered to be "big time," were like older brothers to me. They fought the bigger guys who tried to bully me. It was they who had taught me how to steal, how to live

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in the streets of Harlem. It was Danny who had taught me most of the street ways. He taught me by cheating me, taking me along on "scores," and showing me my mistakes whenever I lost a fight.

Whenever I lost a fight Danny would always say you should have stabbed that punk. To Danny, everybody was a punk. It was Danny who had first taught me how to use a knife in a street fight. I remember him showing me how to get the knife out of my belt without my opponent seeing it. Danny would say "a cat should never know that you have a knife until he has been cut or stabbed." And this is usually the way it was when he stabbed a guy.

BUTCH was the most loyal guy I knew, and also the best thief. Butch had taught me how to hitch rides on street cars and buses. He also taught me not to run when I stole something. Butch would never admit that he was the best thief in the neighborhood. He would always say that Sol was the best because Sol had taught him many things about stealing. Sol was much older than Butch and had been stealing much longer, but he had been caught while Butch had not yet been "busted." In my opinion that made Butch the better thief.

Kidd had taught me how to play hookey from school. I was about six years old when I first heard about "hookey" and I pleaded with Kidd to teach me the game. He promised me he would teach me on the first day I went to school. This promise had to wait until the second day, because on the first day my mother took me to get me registered. Once I learned how to play hookey, I seldom went to school, and this often led to staying away from home. I would look in the mailbox and could always tell if there was a card from the school. The yellow truancy card in the mailbox meant that if I went home that night, the razor strop awaited me. When I played hookey I would either go on a stealing tour of the city or sneak into a movie. Kidd had also taught me how to sneak into a movie.

Stealing had become a part of me and I became very adept at this art. After Wiltwyck I felt lost whenever I was not stealing or "rumbling." Perhaps that's why I began to spend more time with my new gang and less time with my old cohorts.

Less than three months after my release, I was arrested for gang fighting, but was released in my mother's custody. Three weeks later I was in a backyard stealing some sheets off a a clothes line. Turk, a member of my new gang whom I had become "tight" with, was with me. At my house there were festivities taking place because mama had hit the number. I had to get away from it and when I reached the street, the first person I saw was Turk. He was always ready to do whatever I suggested. Turk's favorite words were "Sonny, what are we gonna do?" That cold night in December, when I said to Turk, let's go steal some sheets, he seemed to be waiting for the suggestion.

When we had been in the backyard for about fifteen minutes, Turk shouted, "Foot it, Sonny!" I stood there waiting to see what he wanted to run from. I didn't see anybody, but after the first shot was fired I decided to run. By the time I reached the top of the stairs leading from the backyard I was feeling unusually tired. But I kept running even after I felt the blood streaming down my leg and realized I had been shot. I panicked and started yelling, "Turk! Turk! I'm

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shot." I ran into a fish-and-chip joint where I collapsed. As I lay on the floor of the dirty joint, my fear of dying began slowly to diminish.

I FOUND myself wishing that mama would stop jumping up while she cried, because she was shaking the shabby floor and it made me feel the bullet more. I never gave a second thought to Turk's question when he bent over me as I fell to the floor, and asked me if I were going to tell the cops that he was with me. This was all very normal in Harlem where somebody was always getting shot, stabbed, or his throat cut. However, I found it disturbing to have it happen to me. As the pain began to ease up, I started thinking how lucky I was to die this way. I thought about the boy whom I had watched two members of my old gang throw from the roof of a six-story building. I recalled how frightened he looked when they grabbed him, and I recalled his terrified screams as he went over. Yeah, compared to him I was really lucky.

While I lay on the rolling stretcher in Harlem Hospital emergency ward, I thought the police would never stop questioning me. Danny, Butch, and Kidd arrived shortly after I did. First Butch would beg me to tell him who had shot me, then Danny would start while Kidd threatened to kill Turk if I died. They all had their "pieces" and were ready and anxious to shoot somebody. Fortunately, I had not seen whoever it was that shot me, and could tell them no more than I had told the police.

Three weeks after my two week stay in Harlem Hospital, and while the surgeon who had operated on me was still marveling at what he and God had done, I was sent to New York State Training School for Boys at Warwick, New York. I stayed at Warwick for nine months. When I returned to Harlem, I had learned many new ways of crimes. I had also become well acquainted with many of New York City's teenage criminals.

Upon my return to Harlem I no longer cared to steal or partake in gang fights, but I had to steal a few things to show my gang that getting shot had not unnerved me. Two days after I came home, I received my first real pistol, as a coming home gift. After pulling enough scores to get up one hundred dollars, I bought a half pound of pot and went into business. Within two weeks, the word had gotten around that I had the best pot in town. For the next three months—at the end of which I got "busted"—I did a pretty good job of emulating a Harlem "hustler" who was doing good. This included wearing thirty-dollar shoes and giving frequent handouts to old friends who had become junkies. Danny, one of my favorite old tutors in the ways of the street, had now become my favorite junkie; I would always give him a "nickel bill" to get a fix.

Following two more trips to Warwick, I moved out of Harlem and got a job. Most of my spare time was spent in Harlem, taking the ribbing and laughing that my attending evening high school evoked from my old street corner cronies. They laughed for three years. When I entered college there were no more laughs.

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SOME INTERESTING changes have occurred in Harlem during the past few years. It seems that many of the people who I once thought were merely waiting for something to happen to them, have made things happen. The last time I saw Danny, I could not

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help but admire him. Danny is making money by the fists full. There is nothing remarkable about a guy making lots of money selling drugs. But in Danny's case the admirable feat was his being able to kick an eight-year drug habit, and then make the stuff work for him. Danny is the only reformed junkie I have ever known to stay reformed for any length of time. And his presence in Harlem is most encouraging to other junkies who dream of kicking their habit and becoming pushers in turn.

I saw Turk yesterday and we talked of his next fight. It was an inspiring experience for me to hear Turk, who has become one of the world's leading heavyweight fighters, explain how he would beat his next opponent. It seems like only yesterday when I was explaining to him the strategy of our next "rumble."

The big changes in Harlem are in the people I know who have changed my sympathy to respect and admiration. If you've ever known a junkie for any length of time you'll understand the struggle he has to go through to get off the poison kick. He can't leave the world entirely, so for him to become master and dispenser of the thing that had ruled him for so long and so destructively is a great achievement. Harlem still has a much greater number of the miserable than any place else I know. This is inspiring also. Where else can one find so many people in such pain and so few crying about it?

WHAT THE CONFLICT GANG OFFERS

The gang offers these boys an opportunity to act out their repressed feelings and serves as a release for their pent-up frustrations. Even more important, membership in a gang offers them a shield for their own insecurities and guilt feelings and nourishes an open hostility to society. All forms of authority are scorned and reviled. The police, both as a symbol of authority and as a law-enforcement agency, are hated and feared. School officials, recreation leaders, and settlement house workers are similarly rejected. In place of commonly accepted values a different code is substituted, some of whose features—wanton destructiveness, personal violence, and a disregard for society—at times cause serious trouble. For many of its more disturbed members, affiliation with a conflict group compensates for their own sense of inadequacy in studies and sports and for their inability to get along in normal social activities. Membership in a group like the Egyptian Kings or Sportsmen not only develops an ego-building "rep" but also provides protection against rival gangs. Behind the mask of swagger—this braggadocio of insecure youth—lies a gnawing feeling of nothingness.

While the conflict gang is primarily a phenomenon of male adolescence, teenage girls often associate with gangs. These girls are usually the girl friends of individual gang members and not infrequently have "deb" organizations which parallel the male gang. The number of these girls in New York City has been estimated at several thousand, ranging in age from twelve to their early twenties, although generally between fifteen and seventeen years old. Often a real or apparent overture or insult to one of these girls will serve as the pretext for a rumble between opposing gangs, during which the girls sometimes serve as gun carriers. The problem of these gang girls, who are on occasion no less troublesome and dangerous than the gang boys, is interwoven with the problem of male conflict groups.

—From Interim Report, see page 338.

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A PUERTO RICAN IN NEW YORK

Eileen Diaz

The newest faces in our city are Puerto Rican. They have come in great numbers and settled primarily in the slum areas close to the Negro ghettos. Like the national groups preceding them they speak a foreign language; but unlike them they come as citizens—citizens whose economic and social assimilation into the city's population is complicated by color.

Looking past the glass and stone palaces of our skyline, we see a curtain of separation rising like a fog. Only the experience of living can show us what it is like to be a Puerto Rican in New York, what it is like to be the victim of economic and social discrimination.

Who can erase memories of a deaf and dumb child with her mother and sister huddled in a small, dark room with an empty kerosene stove, the winter wind blowing in at them from broken window panes; a hall toilet broken and flooded where the bursting water pipe had covered the walls with an inch-thick coat of ice and to which the children of the floor were still running; a huge water bug crawling out from under a cracked kitchen bathtub; the scurry of silent feet as a key turns and the light goes on in the kitchen and the roaches and mice run for cover; the swirl of smoke rising up the stairs and the familiar fire engine sirens; the pale child with a rat bite on her ear walking with thin, bent legs to the hospital clinic; a roaring fire in an empty lot piled with garbage and old mattresses smoldering in the sun; a heroin-addicted youth deliberately setting fire to the curtains in his store front living-room in an orgy of suffering.

New York is pulsing with music from candy stores and the "Bodega Hispana," the local grocery that specializes in tropical vegetables and staples of island cookery. The Puerto Ricans live with music, a constant reminder to them that their homeland is a place of imagination and joy and deep traditions amidst its poverty and swamps.

In the dope-pusher streets of New York there is no hope of Eden or promise of abundant life, only small, dead hours of escape between hunts, between thefts. The young girl puts on a starched white blouse and goes out to sell herself. She escapes the slavery of her life in vague dreams and the warm sleep into which she enters with the hypodermic needle. The hot street, damp with the sweat of idleness and the sweat of work, erupting violence and tenderness, streaked with the footsteps of God, the eager, swift running of the young, the tumultuous shout of vitality and play, the dull groaning isolation of death, persistent as the overflowing garbage pails and the glitter of broken glass crushed into the expressionless earth of empty lots: these are the

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images and sounds of the Puerto Rican slums in New York.

The spirit of the people rises like wavering candles in the churches, as heads under black mantillas and white communion veils and bare-headed men offer unceasing prayer, or in the store front meeting places where tambourines clash and voices cry out into the dark night.

MANY PUERTO RICANS in this city feel that their new life has compensated for the loss of their homeland. They are more "secure," have better jobs than they could have had at home, are further protected by labor unions. They put up with prejudice, with crumbling buildings and with the overcrowding of the slums. They hope and work steadily for better things. Many have done very well if we are to make comparisons with island poverty. Hundreds are living in public housing projects, the newest of which are well kept, with trees and wading fountains, with imaginative play areas, and designed with large, airy rooms. They are taking part in "self-help" programs, in parish activities, in union activities, and, at times, political activity.

For the great majority of Puerto Ricans, however, there is still a struggle to pay the rent, to buy the weekly bags of rice and beans and milk for the babies, the grinding and hopeless battle against an army of roaches, mice and rats and the decay of ancient, neglected buildings. Psychologically the hardest battle is against race hatred, which in its extreme is a reflection of the silent place in all of us that seeks for its own and remains cold to the world. It is this silent place which exploits the poor, which justifies

A Puerto Rican Speaks

"Sometimes it's hard to figure out what you really want, but I know if you have a clean house and some money in your pocket things don't seem so hard. I know I'll never be rich unless I get lucky, but even if I did I probably couldn't get a nice place to move into where I could see my kids going to a good school and being the same as the others—nice clothes, birthday parties, playing with all kinds of other kids and meeting their mothers and fathers.

"Money means plenty when you haven't got it, for instance when someone dies and there's no money to pay for the funeral. Back home in Puerto Rico it didn't cost anything to bury somebody. We can't keep up with things here, not making much money and with layoffs all the time. You can't count on anything except the bills coming in and the super knocking at the door for the rent.

"I'd like to have a little business of my own. You know, a candy store or something like that with nobody bothering me all the time to work faster. I had one boss who made me punch my time card out at night and then go back to work a couple of hours for no pay. They treat you like you don't know what's going on, but when you need the money you have to play dumb.

"If I had a good job I could move someplace where the dope addicts weren't always breaking into apartments and you don't get nervous when you see a bunch of guys running down the street looking mad. A place like this is too rough. The kids are scared and they think things are never going to be better. They don't care what happens to them and start acting like big shots. It's easy to find trouble around here.

"One thing I know. I'd like to walk anyplace I feel like, without feeling like looking down at the sidewalk when people pass like they were asking, 'what are you doing here.' We might save some money and go back to Puerto Rico, but it's not easy to go back because now this is my home . . ."

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itself incessantly. We hear, "They are not used to anything better"; "The rent is low enough. If they want clean halls and toilets and the walls repaired let them do it themselves. We can't afford to make improvements."

Recently a Puerto Rican infant living in Brooklyn was chewed to death by rats as she slept in her bed. What does it take to shake a society out of its complacency and indifference? The average "right neighborhood" citizen has about as much chance of seeing a hungry child as he has of getting to Mars. How long has it been since you've heard, "Nobody goes hungry in New York"? Yes, there is help after getting through the tangles of the Welfare Department and certainly our charitable organizations are doing a dedicated job. But they can never reach everyone in need.

The Puerto Rican encounters the color wall in many places. The light Puerto Rican has the opportunity to reject his background by establishing himself as "basically" a Spaniard. Some of the wealthier families in Puerto Rico keep their families "pure" by correct marriages, but these are exceptions, and even the fair Puerto Rican in the United States finds it difficult to avoid color prejudice. Emotional problems arise within families where the darker children are subtly placed in an inferior social position even among themselves, because of the social desirability of white skin and straight hair.

As long as we have steaming blocks like some in East Harlem, ready to collapse, with sinking floors, broken, inadequate plumbing, garbage-filled first-floor halls, broken boilers, dangerous wiring, disease-breeding overcrowding, police cooperation with racketeers on one hand and crackdowns on juvenile offenders on the other; until enough people care about guidance and recreation for the children trapped in these surroundings; in fact until there is no such thing as a slum or a segregated neighborhood, we have no right to call ourselves a just society. The problems of New York are the problems of mankind.

"Below Public Assistance Standards"

There are today in New York City 70,000 families consisting of two or more people—a total of 250,000 persons—receiving public assistance, in one or another form. Of these, 61,138 people are receiving Home Relief from the city. Breaking down this figure we find that 27,094 or 44 per cent are in families whose wages are being supplemented by Home Relief. Over 25,000 of those receiving supplementary help are either Puerto Ricans or Negroes.

In 1956, the State Interdepartmental Committee on Low Incomes estimated that for every person receiving assistance in New York there were at least 3 persons not receiving help whose income was below public assistance standards. Even if we allow conservatively for a 50 per cent reduction in this ratio of three non-public assistance low income families to each public assistance family since 1956, there must be at least 375,000 people today in New York City whose incomes are below the public assistance allowances. (These standards are determined by the cost of items needed for minimal standards of health and safety.)

According to Welfare Department tables stating maximum income for eligibility for free school lunches in New York City (that is, an income equivalent to minimal welfare standards), a family of two would require $52 per week; a family of three $63 and a family of four $74. Above these income levels, no free lunches for children, no supplementary help.—Based upon report of Welfare Commissioner James R. Dumpson.

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OBSTACLE COURSE TO MECCA: JAZZ IN NEW YORK

Nat Hentoff

I

The final tournament still takes place in New York. Here the jazzman from Detroit or Houston or Paris is tested. The judges who are by far most important to him are the other musicians. He is interested economically in being noticed by the critics, but with very rare exceptions, the young musician's self-respect rides on what the established players say.

"This place," says patriarch Coleman Hawkins, "makes *all* musicians sound kind of funny when they come around. When they first come here, I don't care what they were in their home towns, when they come *here,* they get cut. . . . They have to come here and learn all over again, practically. Then when they come back they are all right. Or, if they stay around they can develop to be all right."

Hawkins cited the case of a Florida alto saxophonist, Julian "Cannonball" Adderley and his brother, Nat, a trumpet player. They arrived in the summer of 1955, and made an initial impression; but, according to Hawkins, "the boys were talking . . . his brother plays a nice trumpet, but man, Cannonball's *nothing!* . . . Well, Cannonball left—he came back . . . he's blowin' now."

Cannonball, now a successful combo leader, agrees: "No matter how much talent and experience a player brings here, there's things to learn when he sits down with a seasoned band. . . . No matter what they bring here, New York shakes them. A young tenor player was complaining to me that Coleman Hawkins made him nervous. Man, I told him Hawkins was *supposed* to make him nervous. Hawkins has been making other sax players nervous for 40 years. . . . This town is like a world governing body of jazz."

The key testing grounds used to be jam sessions, but these informal after-hours debates can seldom be found now. One reason for their decline is involved with the increased departmentalization of jazz. Nearly any jazz player could "sit in" twenty-five years ago. But now there are more generic "styles" than there were in the twenties and thirties—although not as many *individual* styles—and as a result, cliques have developed. Among the young modernists, for instance, the "hard" players generally stay by themselves. Gerry Mulligan is not apt to jam with Horace Silver.

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There is also some amount of racial selection, with the selecting usually done by the Negroes. For some years, especially in the fifties, there has been a strong anti-white animus among many of the younger Negro players. ("You're playing too goddamn *white,* man," one leader snapped at a sideman on stand.) Part of the prejudice comes from the Negroes' belief that whites have too often capitalized on what have essentially been Negro contributions to jazz ("You think Count Basie ever made the money Benny Goodman did in the thirties and forties?"); and part has arisen from a fierce conviction among some that whites by definition are inferior jazz players. They lack "the soul" that is endemic to the Negro musician who has earned his authenticity by the amount of "dues" he has paid by being a Negro.

OSTENSIBLY, more of the Negro modernists have recently been willing to admit white players to the club; but many still believe that while there are some white "swingers" like Zoot Sims, there are very few white originators. They have a point. The main current influences on the developing jazzmen are Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, the perennial Duke Ellington and the bitterly controversial Ornette Coleman. The important composer-arrangers are George Russell, Charlie Mingus, Benny Golson, Horace Silver, John Lewis. All are Negro. In fact, the only white player in the past couple of years to have won serious respect among some Negro players has been pianist Bill Evans. And significantly, Evans broke the barrier because Miles Davis hired him for a time as a pianist. The Davis imprimatur is one of the most effective in jazz; but even his frequently stated conviction that he doesn't care if a man is green so long as he can play well, has not much moved the more racially prideful jazzmen.

The newcomer to New York, therefore, finds it more difficult to be accepted if he's white. He also finds few jam sessions in which to warm up and gain major league experience over a long period of time. Since the musicians are now pretty well divided by style—older men vs. younger; "hard" vs. softer, more melodic jazz; experimentalists vs. neo-orthodox followers of Charlie Parker—the old-style, free-for-all session has almost disappeared. And since most established players are now grouped into their own combos, their need for jamming is not nearly so acute as was the case in the thirties and forties when most of the better players were imprisoned in big bands during the night and had to have room to stretch out before they went home.

The apprentice, therefore, has to catch on as best he can. Strip joints, neighborhood clubs, and the ultimate sacrifice—a day job. If he has no contacts at all in New York, he must somehow become known to the regularly working players. No notices of auditions are posted anywhere. If a leader makes a change or a sideman quits, hiring and recommendations for hiring are all by word-of-mouth. "It's the same thing in the studios and the Broadway shows," says one Negro musician. "That's why it took us so long to get in there. If you don't live in the same part of the city with the other guys, if you don't hang around with them,

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you don't hear about the jobs." A complete loner of whatever color is apt to starve if he thinks talent alone will feed him in New York.

II

Most younger players, however, know someone when they arrive. There has been, for example, a large quantity of Detroit emigrants in the past six years. The earlier adventurers are now part of "the establishment" so that the newer wave at least has a chance to be heard and considered for jobs. A similar geographically oriented, ambulatory hiring-hall exists for most of the other players in a latter-day equivalent of Jewish *landsmen* societies.

An out-of-towner is not fully admitted to Local 802, American Federation of Musicians, for six months during which time he must remain in New York. For the first three months, he can only play one-nighters in the area, although he can begin working regularly after three months. There are ways around the regulations. A card has been given a player after three months if he has a job with a band that will be spending most of its time out of town for the next three months. If a booking agency has a particular interest in getting a man a card immediately, a certain amount of "persuasion" will always work.

The jazz player gets little help from the union. While 802 does a relatively competent job of bargaining for the symphony and general recording players, its officers have little knowledge of, or concern for, the particular problems of the jazzman. Nor is the Negro one of their basic concerns. The flagrant discrimination in the networks, classical orchestras and Broadway pit bands has been ignored by the present union administration; and remedial action began only after a 1958 Urban League report embarrassed heads of symphony orchestras, producers, and network brass. The union countenances an extraordinary procedure by which contractors—hiring agents—are both union members and hirelings of employers. These powerful figures build up their own cliques and few will voluntarily hire Negroes. The discrimination among society bands is worse than in any other area, the main offenders being Meyer Davis, Lester Lanin, and Ben Cutler. Mr. Davis, as usual, played the Inauguration Ball this year.

In addition to waiting for a union card that is of slim use to him, the newcomer also has to apply for a police permit. New York is the only major city which requires anyone who works where liquor is sold to be "approved" by the division of licenses of the police department. A musician or waiter has to go downtown, get printed and mugged, and pay $3 for his cabaret card plus a dollar for pictures. It has to be renewed at the same fee every two years. The money finds its way—with absolutely no statutory authority—into the police pension fund.

There is strong indication that this requirement is unconstitutional, but no musician or other night club employee has had the money to fight

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a denial of his card all the way through the courts. The city, after all, has our tax money to finance its legal staff. Permits are often denied on whim. A card has frequently been denied because a musician has been arrested—not convicted—in the past. A card has been denied because a player was busted ten years earlier for having a gun in his car. A previous arrest for possession of marijuana or narcotics usually means automatic denial unless the musician has heard of Maxwell T. Cohen, a tough lawyer who consistently fights card cases and often wins them. Even Cohen, however, recently lost an important test case that should result in an indefinite retention of the card system.

If a player has even been convicted previously of a felony or certain specified misdemeanors (such as possession of narcotics or "lewdness"), he may not be able to work even if he somehow gets a police card. Such a musician also needs a permit from the State Liquor Authority which has its own quixotic criteria. Of course, if a booking agency or another interested party has intense economic reasons for wanting a man to have a card, the card can be obtained for a consideration. Under a relatively new ruling, the club owner keeps the police cards of all the musicians during their engagements, somewhat in the manner of a hotel clerk in a totalitarian state. "It's supposed to be an identification card," a musician points out, "but now a cop can run us in early in the morning on the way home because we don't have our card."

Having been mugged, printed, granted a police card and a union card, the player is then an official member of the jungle. If he acquires enough of a reputation to draw the interest of a record company, he may well be conned into signing a contract by which the firm has so much the upper hand that at the end of the contract, the musician will owe the label a considerable amount of money. Options usually are entirely at the firm's discretion. Costs of a session, album covers, liner notes and "promotion" are usually charged against the leader of a date. Sometimes the company man in charge of recording has a *sub rosa* publishing firm and insists that several of his songs be included on a session, or the leader can't do the tunes *he* wants to. Some companies are honest and the musicians' grapevine eventually hips a player about those he should avoid.

Few leaders derive much income from recordings—except, of course, for the major figures in the field. Sidemen get paid only for the date, no matter how much their improvisations contribute to the eventual success of the record. Grace notes—such as sending a sideman a copy of the record on which he's played—are practically unknown in the record business.

Club work is not especially well paid. In some of the Village jazz clubs, the scale is as low as $76 for a six-day week (Local 802, as mentioned before, is seldom militant for its jazz constituents). Birdland pays about $130 for a six-day week as does the Roundtable with the hours being from 8:15 to 2:30 or 9:45 to 3:45. A sideman can get all of $154 for a six-night week at the Embers, but he has to work from 7:30 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

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III

With scant exceptions, club owners are not especially fond of jazz and they tend to classify the musicians as somewhat below the status of a busboy. Normally querulous, they are further harassed by consistent and insistent police graft. There are not only the Christmas lists which could take care of a large chunk of the *Times'* "Neediest Cases," but there is the week-to-week greed. A cop who is overlooked can palm the soap in the men's room and issue a summons for not having a cake there. He can find the club's illumination wanting or he can plant under-age customers and wait until they're served.

The *chutzpah* of the cops is awsome. I was talking with a jazz club owner when a man in street clothes came and in tried to mooch $5. I moved away, assuming the man to be a relative or old friend of the owner. The moocher became louder and increasingly importunate. Finally the owner went to the register and gave him the five.

"That," the owner said later in disgust, "was a clerk at the local precinct. He doesn't even walk the beat, but he makes the rounds like the rest of them. He was bugging me so much because this was his first call, and he's superstitious. He figured if he didn't make out here, he wouldn't have a good night."

The club owners' exasperation with the police is usually taken out on the musicians and waiters.

Some cops, notably in the Village, are unhappy when a room begins to attract Negro-white couples. When Charlie Mingus played in one club, he drew quite a number of mixed couples, and the local constabulary told the owner not to book him again. "That guy encourages miscegenation."

New York obviously isn't Birmingham, but the Negro musician with a white girl often gets the treatment. Several have been beaten up, particularly in the Village, and it is not uncommon for a taxi to ignore a mixed couple. "Why," said one young lady after two cabs had whizzed by, "don't they stop?"

"Because you're Jewish," her Negro pianist friend answered.

THOUGH HOODS don't own all the jazz clubs, they own some. One owner assigned a bodyguard to a vocalist who wanted to leave his club and his record company. "Be a nice girl, sweetie," her companion soothed her, "or I'll break your arm." One owner, reported to have strong ties with the Syndicate, somehow manages to persuade nearly everyone who appears regularly at his club to sign with his record company. The same company was one of the leading disbursers of payola to disc jockeys, according to belated FCC statistics.

The jungle hardly ends at the city limits. Musicians playing some of the summer festivals found that a new combine which controls several of these events have forced prices down so that if a man wanted to work any of their cultural events, he had to take their price or be frozen out. One of the promoters frequently paid off in cash, and the figures in his books didn't always jibe with what the musician took home.

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The booking agencies, by and large, work for the clubs rather than the musicians. Most of the major offices are still run as "plantations" and if the player doesn't like the way he's treated, he's free to move on to another "plantation." If a leader becomes a valuable enough property, the office will be solicitous of his feelings; but if he's relatively unknown, he "cooperates" or is ignored. Moves to start a co-operative, musician-run booking agency have never worked because most of the players are afraid of being blacklisted by the big offices. If the offices are against them, most of the clubs will be too since the offices use their "name" attractions as weapons to get what they want from the club owners. "If you want so-and-so," one agency often proposes, "you gotta take Smith for a week too." And, conversely, an agency can convince a club *not* to book Smith.

"I get up at noon," a jazz player said recently, "and I read about a new advance in nuclear warfare and there's a *Saturday Evening Post* ad how about how seriously Sammy Davis takes Judaism, and then I go to work and smile at the hoods, and play for an audience that's talking and boozing and trying to make out for the night, and I begin to feel I'm talking to myself, and maybe I've flipped long ago without realizing it."

"A jazz musician," says apprentice Steve Lacy, "is a combination orator, dialectician, mathematician, athlete, entertainer, poet, singer, dancer, diplomat, educator, student, comedian, artist, seducer, public masturbator and general all-around good fellow."

"My husband," complains the wife of another player, "comes home exhausted. Can you wonder why?"

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OFF-BROADWAY, 1960

Mary Otis

In the recent Broadway actors' strike, things that most people only surmise came into the open: for instance, that out of 12,000 Equity members only 731 were involved in the Broadway productions that closed down, or that the weekly minimum salary for Broadway actors is $103.50, whereas musicians get $155.50 and carpenters, property men and electricians, $156. Throughout the strike the Mayor alluded to the "cultural and economic" effects on the city. Like "Brown 'n Serve," the two words are intimately linked in New York. Broadway is a big cog in the tourist industry, and when its lights go out hundreds of waiters and garage attendants are laid off. Thus it becomes practically a moral duty to keep the theater going, regardless of what you think of it. Broadway may lose a lot of money for itself, but it is an asset to the city.

This gives it a sort of municipal power, a power over flow of traffic and efficient disposal of large numbers of people who don't know how to dispose of themselves. Things are made easy; chartered buses provide a packaged evening of drinks, restaurant, show and transportation home, on Wednesday night opening curtain is pulled back to 7:30 to accommodate commuters. On another level, press-agents make up charts on which you check off the plays you've seen, like Howard Johnson charts for ice-cream flavors, and the critic, whatever his intentions, is used mainly as a guide on how to respond to these flavors. In short, the general assumption is that the audience is a herd of rhinoceroses that has to be guided into the theater and retained there in orderly fashion for two hours. The actors are afraid of the rhinoceroses occupying the seats, and the rhinoceroses are afraid of the actors. There is complaisance on both sides, mixed with false confidence; the actor straining over the line which moved the critic, the audience laughing hard at the joke the critic cited.

THE GROWING CONSPIRACY to turn New York into an enormous hotel gives its theater a museum-like impersonality and eclecticism. All plays seem to belong to the past, and to fit into certain loose categories. First, the musical, and the longer it has been running the greater its attraction as a sight-seeing phenomenon. Then the tearful play about "tenderness" or "loneliness," written in good faith as a nostalgic recall of early Americana. Then foreign plays, provided they are made acceptable by being given the English treatment, and of course the English play itself, lately imported as an entire production. Last year I discovered that in the very latest English play there always comes a point when the hero starts criticizing the decor (the American audience worries secretly for the rest of the evening about the decor at home), and no matter how he rages,

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he afflicts us sentimentally, with forgotten aspirations, reminiscences of the thirties, or lost manners, like the man who tastes Tetley's tea. This year we have a more amusing, though not particularly enduring, Irish tawdriness, also suprisingly nostalgic.

I am not at all deploring the importation of productions, especially the more exotic ones; the charming Piccolo Teatro from Milan, and the Kabuki, which created such a stir that the Actors' Institute is now learning to play Kabuki in English. It is true that the American actor learns from the English that he should work on his voice, and from the French mime that he has far to go in developing his body, and from the Japanese that he should make his every action significant. But significant of what? All the technique in the world is useless if there is no content to apply it to. What content there is seems secondhand, squeezed from another source, such as novels adapted, or historical trials transposed verbatim. Writers do not really want to use the theater; it seems like such an operation.

THERE IS ANOTHER audience, however, made up of local anachronisms in the form of permanent residents; unemployed actors, perpetual students, people who have been around a long time, and who keep going back to the small theaters in cellars, converted movie houses, cheap hotel ballrooms. This whole phenomenon of "off-Broadway" is the safety valve for the disqualified, and its main quality is its disqualification. By this I don't mean that all the acting is bad. But both good and bad actors really want to act, and may do so without being paid, and in the given economy this constitutes almost a crime, because it keeps the enterprise out of the economic system. When "*off*-off Broadway" cabarets in coffee houses showed signs of success, they drew the attention of Police Department, Fire Department and Actors' Equity; the police wanting cabaret licenses and some control, firemen wanting electrical work done, and Actors' Equity wanting to establish salaries.

Off-Broadway manages to qualify technically on all these counts, but only just, and by commercial standards it really doesn't. It is a sprawling, unselective sort of theater, where groups form and dissolve instantly, where anything may be presented, from abstract painting with jazz background music to the Oxford student type of exercise of the Greek plot. Its very freedom makes it possible for off-Broadway to imitate Broadway, as in those drab little musicals full of "youthful enthusiasm" and "naive charm." But most of the plays have been chosen for another reason; whatever it is, it clearly belongs to the people involved. Ionesco, Adamov, Becket, Behan, Ugo Betti, Genêt, O'Casey, are treated as local discoveries, and taken up boldly by people who have never seen them produced, and who sometimes seem never to have acted or directed in their lives before. The productions are by no means all avant-garde. *Machinal* is plucked out of the thirties, Chekhov's *A Country Scandal* is introduced for the first time. And no matter how inhuman the direction, the production is rewarding because the maltreatment is not intentional, or fitted into some doctrine of what the consumer wants. These groups do not set out deliberately to distort the play in order to package it more attractively, and the original intention is intimated by an actor here, or a director there, if you keep an eye out for it. As in a democracy, well-inten-

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tioned incompetence is in the long run preferable to ill-intentioned competence. An Anouihl play which on Broadway is polished and dead becomes, off-Broadway, awkward but alive. Perhaps, under this system, incompetence is the secret of survival. The Living Theater, the only off-Broadway group to remain intact through several years, is particularly exasperating in its inept acting and direction, which seems so persistent as to be almost deliberate. Deliberate ineptitude would be a kind of protection, effectively preventing electricians' unions or other greedy factions from taking an interest. The Living Theater has simply survived, floundering in its strained sloppiness, its worst productions patted on the head by avuncular critics, and its best production, *The Connection,* using that strained sloppiness to effect.

As for the playwright who appears off-Broadway, he would probably sell his soul to make money just like everybody else, but since he is not allowed, or (like George Grosz trying to do magazine art) unable to make it, the rage with which he regards his exclusion sometimes puts grit into a personal style that might otherwise have complied with the rules of tourism.

Tennessee Williams is an exception in that he is given a chance to fail on Broadway first. But when *Camino Real* failed, it was assumed that it was because it was too "way out," and for this reason could be placed under the aegis of off-Broadway. In the preface to the published play Williams aligns himself with the beatniks in describing his approach. "I felt a new sensation of release, as if I could 'ride out' like a tenor sax taking the breaks in a Dixieland combo or a piano in a bop session." This may be true, but when Tennessee Williams is most careless of Broadway requirements, or "sincere," his texture does not become tougher, as you might expect, but simply more "sincerely" phony, like the quote above. In *Camino Real,* Casanova, Don Quixote, etc., make their appearances to rouse the middle-brow romantics. Spanish phrases, "madrugada," "sangre," "miedo," arouse the bull-fight and first-year Spanish student. The central character, the American, Kilroy, has a too-big heart. "What can one man do with another man's heart?" asks Byron, and Casanova seizes a piece of bread and stamps on it. For no perceptible reason Kilroy must be stripped of his belongings, humiliated as a clown, and maltreated to the end of the play. Here Don Quixote reappears and warns him against self-pity (A considerable retreat from Quixote's first admonition to Truth, Valor and Devoir). This is absolutely "sincere," and incidentally true, because self-pity is the great unadmitted trait of the American Kilroys, beatniks and reprobates. But one feels that the author does not deeply believe that truth, because the the point is always that the heart is stamped on, the "portmanteau" thrown out the window, the delicate lady abased.

When Tennessee Williams speaks of "riding out" like a tenor sax, he is identifying himself shrewdly with the world of jazz, of hipsters. We are, Genêt has suggested, presently preoccupied with "the delicate world of reprobates," and this world is most appropriate to the off-Broadway theater, which also scorns to qualify within the existing commercial set-up. The French avant-garde does not necessarily stress this world; Ionesco's characters are the French little bourgeois, school-teachers, office-workers, civil

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servants, making little stabs at intellectual and cultural conversation on the surface of a great abyss (which is where the terror comes in). This is the device of clowns, and all modern theater, since it doesn't deal with heroes, may be said to deal with clowns. But our reprobates are not so clownish; our underground Negroes are more dismaying than the cheerful Negroes attached to English casts of characters as representatives of such; there is something really defeated about the beatnik, the junkie, the delinquent. The terror and incoherence of this world has been ably portrayed off-Broadway by Jack Gelber and Edward Albee.

The Connection, by Jack Gelber, is a better demonstration of the beat than anything written, simply because it includes audible jazz, the visible Negro and his white equivalent, the physical suffering of the narcotic addict, and his special language. *The Zoo Story*, a one-act by Edward Albee, consists mainly of a monologue delivered by a young beat character, a terrifying and disjointed account of his life, culminating in a kind of suicide. These plays are indigenous to their locale, not because New York and the hipster is the actual scene and subject, but because of the nihilism; a style which is no style, a language which is against language, acting which is against acting. Unfortunately the beatniks are characters, and must be made to perform; a performance it is, and therefore one must treat it as such.

I say unfortunately because in America the performances of either clowns or reprobates tend (as suggested by Tennessee Williams) to be self-pitying. This is not true in some other countries. George Orwell discovered that the down-and-outer in Paris lives autonomously, suspect by the authorities, but deeply independent and capable of dignity. In Mediterranean countries there is a corresponding respect accorded to the clown as artist. Harlequin, leather-masked, never gets fed except by trickery, thus he is light, and springs up from the fall, full of confidence and control. When he removes his mask at the end of the play it comes as a genuine shock, as if some workman had come out from behind the scenes. American comedians used to have some of this workmanlike quality. Also Negro actors, before the "method." The inner man was never presented nakedly as a hopeless case. But our present attitude towards the clown is a fascination with his personal life, childhood, etc. This makes for the sort of movie in which an actor who is not at all a good clown is decorated as one, and made to shed real tears over the decoration, and the camera focuses pathetically on these. *Camino Real* is an aggrandizement of this: Kilroy's clown costume is a sack-cloth of humiliation; to make the nose light up is an act of abasement, no art, but a signal of distress. *Here Come the Clowns* by Philip Barry, recently revived off-Broadway, shows a dwarf, a lesbian, a cuckold, etc. Each hides behind a performance, but the emphasis is agonizingly on the Freudian inner sufferer. The play seems only slightly dated. The beat character is supposed to be independent (bother nobody, nobody bother me) but I don't believe it, especially after seeing *The Connection*. Here the suffering *is* the performance, a flat demonstration of despair, without irony, a sort of high-level advertisement and appeal.

With a sordid subject the sentimentality can pass unnoticed; it is almost subliminal. In *The Connection* an old

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salvation army sister cues us in. At first an outsider and a square, incongruous in the musicians' pad which she has been led into, she at last identifies with the rest of the cast.

> I'm growing old and my eyes are going. I don't want to leave. I've been in the hospital. They put a needle in my arm too.

And finally, repeated three times, "You are not alone." You are not alone, don't be lonely, we love you. So that although this appears on the surface to be nothing more than a presentation of reality, impartial and *without comment*, we are appealed to secretly along the familiar lines of American drama under the auspices of Eugene O'Neill. For it was he who started it. I mean that quality which is maudlin and wants to have its hand held, and which is really the origin of the nostalgic play. *The Blacks,* by Genet, subtitled "A Clown Play," treats the clown in the European manner; the mask, black or white, is grotesque, but the wearer assured. Whatever one thinks of Genet, and his commitment to hate, this theater has a dignity and clean formality which is badly needed in America.

SENTIMENTALITY is by no means easy to avoid, and the greatest playwrights, Chekhov, Shaw, Brecht, treat it as a personal enemy which has to be continually wrestled with, watched for and warned against. In a purely technical way sentiment undermines the theater because it is a substitute for any real content, and induces slovenliness in both actor and spectator. If a beat character is easy to portray by doing nothing in particular except showing his wounds (or rather needle marks) there is perhaps some danger that off-Broadway playwrights might concentrate entirely on this, and rely on a subliminal sort of pathos to befuddle everybody. But this underworld is not absolutely identifiable with off-Broadway. It is only what has so far been best expressed, because most easily, and because musicians are better trained than actors. The *Zoo Story* can be played to concentrate on the story. *The Pretender,* by Lionel Abel, plays freely and incongruously with a race situation, stressing rational argument, with reversals, irony and wit. *Gallows Humor,* by Jack Richardson, is witty in the manner of early comedy movies, with a biting edge to playfulness, and pantomimed philosophy.

Spokesmen of the commercial theater have made an adjustment to off-Broadway; they have mentally assigned to it the function of proving-ground for their future Broadway directors and playwrights. It is depressing to think that this may be true (euphemistically: whatever is proved would have to be unproved), that at the first opportunity any one of these people would jump at the chance of "being discovered," and remaining to work for the rest of their lives in order to stay "discovered." I hope not, because these writers have something good in common; an assurance which the people who write for Broadway lack. It is an odd sort of assurance, which results in all sorts of excesses, blunders and mistakes; excesses, blunders and mistakes being the very essence of accomplishment. Writers for off-Broadway can play without distraction, and work with a sort of aristocratic combination of frivolity and endurance.

In an amusing sketch called *Flim and Flam* Edward Albee confronts a successful with a less successful playwright. The latter tells the former that he is writing an article which will be a categorical denunciation of

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Broadway, manages to get the established playwright to agree with his views, and then informs him, to his horror, that this has been an interview. Albee has the right idea. The sketch, as performed, is much more amusing than the article would have been to read (such as this one). But the title of the proposed article was to be "No Hero." Now it seems to me that the off-Broadway playwrights are the heroes of this theater. Unwilling, perhaps, and by default, and not very graceful about it, they are nevertheless forced to have faith in the doubtful but persistent little groups which will always be forming, dissolving and reforming around a play.

Contributors to NEW YORK, N. Y.: LIONEL ABEL—Playwright, essayist, poet and frequent contributor to DISSENT and many other publications. . . . DANIEL BELL—Well-known sociologist and essayist, his latest work is *The End of Ideology*. . . . CLAUDE BROWN—First published article; now a student, Claude Brown writes of himself and the world he grew up in. . . . EDWARD T. CHASE—As a traffic consultant and informed campaigner against many city evils, Mr. Chase is well known, particularly by the "City Fathers"! . . . FRED J. COOK—Author of the recently published *A Two-Dollar Bet Means Murder*, co-author of the *Nation's* "The Shame of New York." . . . DOROTHY DAY—Editor of the *Catholic Worker;* ardent crusader for those about whom she writes in this issue. . . EILEEN DIAZ—Writer for *Commonweal,* lives with her husband and three children in the "Spanish Harlem" of which she writes. . . . HERBERT GANS—Sociologist-planner, professor at the University of Pennsylvania. . . . PAUL and PERCIVAL GOODMAN—Brothers, one an architect; one the well-known writer (latest works: *Growing Up Absurd* and *Our Visit Overseas*); a formidable team when joined together. The drawings are by Percival Goodman. . . . DANIEL FRIEDENBERG—Well-known writer and journalist whose articles have appeared in *Harper's, New Republic, New Leader,* DISSENT, etc. . . . ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG—Sociologist, lecturer at the *New School* and other universities, authority on urban planning and city problems. . . . MARGARET HALSEY—Author of *With Malice Toward Some, Color Blind;* now at work on a new, as yet untitled book. . . . MICHAEL HARRINGTON—Editor, *New America;* prominent spokesman for the Socialist Party, and its youth and student sections. . . . NAT HENTOFF—His influential writings on jazz plus his frequent appearances in the *Village Voice* and elsewhere have earned him his reputation as a leading critic in his field; recently published *The Jazz Life*. . . . IRVING HOWE—Editor of DISSENT, critic, essayist, author of many books. . . . NORMAN MAILER—Editor of DISSENT, novelist, a major writer of our times. . . . MARY OTIS—Student of theater on and off Broadway. . . . NED POLSKY—Head of educational publishing at The Free Press; most of his previous articles and reviews have been on James Joyce. . . . (MICHAEL) MILLER and (CARL) WERTHMAN—Young sociologists presently teaching and working at the University of California. . . . MARY PERET NICHOLS—A regular contributor to the *Village Voice;* particularly informed about social and other worth-while causes in Greenwich Village. . . . ROBERT NICHOLS—Poet, husband of Mary Nichols, designer of children's playgrounds and settings. . . . MARC D. SCHLEIFER—Poet, journalist, editor of the new political literary "little magazine" *Kulchur*. . . . HARRY SLOCHOWER—Teacher, psychologist, author of many literary and cultural studies. . . . BARBARA SOLOMON—Novelist, contributor to DISSENT and other publications, author of the much praised novel, *The Best of Life*. . . . JERRY TALLMER—Book and theater critic of the *Village Voice*. . . . GUS TYLER—Educational Director of the ILGWU, a trade unionist of long standing. . . . STEPHEN ZOLL—Has played an active part in the campaign he describes to save the Village from the bulldozers; works in publishing field.

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THE MAMA OF US ALL

Jerry Tallmer

On the tombstone of our race, a famous writer has told us, there will some day be carved the single chilling remembrance: *They copulated and read the newspapers.* He didn't go far enough, that writer. Our epitaph is actually going to read: They copulated *with* their newspapers. And who among us would have it otherwise? Who among us would prefer not to have tapped into the bloodstream of life through our intimate couplings with whichever newspapers we were living with, bedding down with, at one particular era or another? Certainly not the man from whom there issued, with such seeming disdain, the words above. Nothing was dearer to him than newspapers to the day he died, and on that day it was the arteries of our own death into which we tapped, for he was Camus.

We are married to our newspapers, we fall in love with them, we fall out of love with them, we commit adultery with them and against them, we ditch them, we divorce them, we remarry. Especially in our early, formative years is the whole thing like a huge ritual of teen-age courtship: between ourselves and a great waiting field of newspapers there are first dates, blind dates, arranged blind dates, pick-up dates, late dates, secret dates, steady dates, broken dates. There are the various thrilling, verboten differences of class and background ("I'm sorry, dear, but we just don't allow that newspaper in this house"—which as a minor cliché of American drama and fiction must go back at least to the administration of James K. Polk). There is the counter-balancing impulse to model oneself after one's parents and follow their standards. We are "brought up on" certain newspapers—another well-worn phrase. I was brought up on *The New York Times* and the now defunct *New York Sun,* an evening paper carrying the Wall Street results and business columns that my father would pore over, and the sports results and philately columns that we both would pore over, often side by side, passing the sections back and forth, under the same 1930's baroque wrought-iron living-room standing lamp. I lived with the *Times* all through high school and college and, whenever I saw it, through the war. I was fresh from service when a literate older friend of mine—I mean about two years older—said he thought I should start taking up with the *Tribune.* It was a lot better written, he said. I tried it, found he was right, and stayed with the *Trib* for about ten years, when a modernization which included green newsprint on certain pages—they soon abandoned it—drove me back into the arms of the *Times.*

In the evening field I stayed with the *Sun* until its demise, if only for the baseball pages. That it was an absurd, arch-reactionary anachronism on every other page was something that

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didn't impinge on me—and wouldn't have bothered me either way—until around the time that F.D.R. entered the White House and I entered junior high school. Then everything began to change. I already had one secret trampy mistress, the *Daily News*. (If you want to know, I have remained one of her regular callers to this day. The old girl's still looking pretty good; they print her picture in the Bachelor cartoon, to prove it, almost once each week.) Now I began to look around for someone to have an affair with on a somewhat higher level. By a "higher" level I, of course, mean a self-reflecting level, someone who would talk my own language, reflect my many newfound passionate interests. If I close my eyes and squeeze them, I can see her with a good deal of precision, this clean slim beautiful girl, probably a vivid brunette, for whom I was searching. I was a middling intellectual middle-class mid-Manhattanite in mid-puberty, awakening in one great huge rush to the fact that I was also part of everything in the world. In the first day back at school as we entered the ninth grade, I walked into Miss Stewart's Social Studies classroom in long pants instead of knickers. The whole class stood up and cheered; now K. was the only boy among us still in knickers; K. was a midget. That week Miss Stewart sent Grete Schuyler and myself, unaccompanied, over to the Ford plant at Edgewater, New Jersey, to find out what an assembly line and a picket line were all about and report on our findings to the others. It was Miss Stewart who later introduced me to the *New York Post*, and all of us to the proper way in which to read and understand a newspaper.

If I squeeze my eyes still harder, I can today see something else about the girl of my dreams that I didn't know then, and wouldn't have admitted to myself if I had known: in my city, in my time, she would have had to be a Jew. All her vibrations, her wave lengths, would have to be Jewish. In this city, whose very pulse is fed by what *Fortune*, in all its majesty, last year pronunciamentoed as "the Jewish élan," only that would have made complete sense. Well, I had struck it right with the *Post*. Now that Alexander Hamilton, who founded it, has passed along, the first, most fundamental fact about the *New York Post* is the throbbing fact of its Jewishness. As it is the green which makes a leaf a leaf, the gray which makes a battleship, it is that which makes the *Post* the *Post*.

ABOUT THE TIME that I started reading it, the paper experienced a change of ownership and format: its headlines, in the snappiest sans-serif in town, were soon to start jumping out at you from fifty paces everywhere. With the angry pride of a young Odets hero I would flaunt the latest hell-raising edition on the Amsterdam Avenue bus, the IRT subway. I could see every Fascist on the opposite seats, every withered-up, crow-clawed Roosevelt-hater, every Bundist delivery boy, every braying Ku Kluxer, turn black with venom. I had been down to the Garden to stand on the seat of a folding chair and, with 18,000 others, shriek out my joyous salute to F.D.R. as he assured us: "We have only just *begun* to fight." Let them turn black, I said to my friend; my friend said to me, we shall build a world without them.

Less than five years later it was no longer a question of building a new world but of saving the old one. The *Post* had a new columnist named

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Samuel Grafton and an exciting new rival named *PM*. The interloper had a vitality sufficient to push even the *Post* into the category of dowager. I was in college now, running a hotly interventionist college newspaper of my own. My colleagues and I read Sam Grafton's flaming calls to arms and almost nothing else in the *Post*—from time to time we would get permission to reprint one of Grafton's columns—but we would read every inch of *PM* except the sports pages, which from the beginning we took to be not much more than a vague pretense. Our own styles were to a large extent unconsciously shaped, I am afraid, by those in *PM*. Off with the old affair, on with the new; a seduction was in progress which was to continue through the war and – speaking for myself – until, on Okinawa, in the weeks just after the end of the war, a reading of Koestler's *The Yogi and the Commissar* made me begin to rethink every ill-shaped political idea I had held ever since getting out of those knickers. Shortly after being restored to civilian life, I began to put an end to the romance with *PM;* we stopped seeing one another altogether; next thing I knew, the girl was dead. It was a bit more than one had bargained for; all in all, it was in fact quite tragic. There remained the *Post*.

She remained, a little heavier in the jowls, a little plumper in the bosom, a little more emphatic in the walk, a little more authoritative in local and national life—she remained and she is with us today and she is *all we have* of that part of our heritage: all. Definitely, she is a woman; definitely, a Jewish woman, a wife, a mama—the affair having long ago atrophied into marriage—a macher, a yenta, a kvetch, a nag, an irremovable conscience, a presence.

And like wife, like mama, she is indispensable. I do not know anyone of my several hundred New York friends who does not read the *Post* every afternoon or evening of his (her) life, and who does not perpetually sneer at it, or on occasion snarl. The writing of barbed parodies of some of its regular features, the penning of supercilious private or public notes to its editors or columnists, has almost become an official profession. I have myself written a theater review in the form of a parody of Rose Franzblau's psychiatric agony column, and there are others who have had similar sport with this incredible lady. I know that more than once I have written not-for-publication diatribes, on matters which I can now barely remember, to *Post* editor James Wechsler. And I also know that I have more than once sent off a fervent mash note to some writer or another on the *Post*—notably, I should guess, to Murray Kempton, who has a talent unique unto himself for touching on, and touching up, the general ignobility of our times. It is the kind of newspaper you love to hate and hate to love: but to hate to love is, first, to *love,* and that is the one-to-one relationship of some 300,000 of us today with the *New York Post*.

THERE IS ONE sure-fire way to determine how necessary the *Post* is for all of us: imagine New York City, and the United States, without it. Hell, there'd be rats crawling through every multiple-dwelling from here to Sacramento.

The *New York Post* as an institution? (That's what I was recklessly asked to write about.) The *New York Post* is an institution which will provide you with all the kicks you require six days out of every week (and in four colors on Saturdays) just with

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the muckings-into-other-people's-lives of dear little grey-haired Mary Worth, the gentile Dorothy Schiff. A number of the most sophisticated girls I've ever known, my wife certainly among them, seize on this cartoon strip daily with all the gleeful intensity of the religious fanatic. (The other thing my wife turns to that way is Franzblau, where she reads the questions only, not the answers. It is less than one time in four that I am successful in discouraging her from reading them out loud.)

The *New York Post* is an institution which will tell you all about nothing about the private life of everybody you never wanted to hear about from Risë Stevens to Herman Wouk. Tell you and tell you and tell you, in endless nine-part articles researched and written by thirteen various members of the staff. A statistical survey thought up by me as I stare out the window reveals that these profiles may be broken down as follows:

Jews, 94 per cent
Negroes, 3 per cent
Catholics, 1 per cent
Others, 2 per cent
Showbiz, 85 per cent
Intellectuals, 5 per cent
Do-gooders, pioneers, etc., 7 per cent
Enemies, 3 per cent
"Beatniks," etc., 5 per cent

The *New York Post* is an institution which is quite capable of turning in a dry season to the horrifying mid-century news that New York City plays host to a million-dollar Numbers Racket. On the other hand, the *New York Post* is an institution in the absence of which, in any season, the builders and shakers and crumbs and con-men and free-booting marauders of Title I and the like would certainly long since have reduced this giant city to their own personal fiefdom.

The *New York Post* is an institution in which the victim is *always* right, especially if someone else has died as a result of his victimization.

The *New York Post* is an institution which lost its probably widest-read columnist (Jimmy Cannon) through underpayment. Which has another columnist named Max Lerner on whom so many wolves are closing in that I shall not. Which has another named Earl's Pearls whose greatest gift is in knowing how to cast them delicately before swine. Which for a period had another named Jackie Robinson who once played the game of baseball in such a way as to awake and recharge my heart, even though I was a lifelong Giant fan, for the next ten years to come; but those ten years are now a hundred years dead, and Jackie Robinson the columnist would have been hard put to it to awake even Allen Klein or Martin Wolfson, the two faithful balls of liberal fire in the *Post's* letters-to-the-editor section. Naive to the last, he ended up thinking that Nixon might be the new Lincoln, and was never heard from again.

The *New York Post* is an institution which has Kempton, Wechsler, Herblock, Bill Shannon, Ted Poston, who, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse could hold their own in any league. They are the paper's inner nerve fiber, its ethic, whether for courage (Poston), individuality of style and viewpoint (Kempton), dogged simplicity of style and viewpoint (Wechsler, Herblock, or the still more dogged decencies and quiet furies of Shannon's tireless legwork in Washington and elsewhere on the national scene. (No one in the business, not even the Jimmy Reston of 1952 and 1956, manifested more sheer contempt

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for Eisenhower the obfuscator-ignoramus and moral coward; it is also characteristic that it was Shannon who was first on the *Post,* and in newspapers generally, to head south to do a first-hand report-in-depth on the non-violent Negro movement which was recognizable in its first few days in 1959 as the most important and exciting national story of the year, the decade, or maybe of the century. (Less fortunate was his more recent and no less stubborn determination to flush the Cuban mud from the flintlocks of the New Frontiersmen.)

But the *New York Post* is also an institution which buries these writers in a sea of pseudo-folksy tabloid journalism which exiles the "hard news" to about six sticks of type woven in and out among the columns, the boilerplate, the auto notes, the comics, the sob stories, the subway failures and other pet peeves, the rapes, the slaughters, and fully as much bedroom scandal as has ever reeked through the pages of the *Daily News* (but the *News* has more nastily gifted writers and headline-writers). The most ironic and aggravating thing about it is that all this garbage-combing is done with the left—or rather the right—hand; it's as if everyone on the paper "knows better" but doesn't know what to do about it.

Well, there are certain therapies available to some of the staff. Bennett Schiff of the rewrite desk doubles with an art column in the week-end edition. There's the week-end page of book reviews where you can sometimes knock out a few words to demonstrate your appreciation of the better things in life. Leonard Lyons of the café beat goes to great pains, week after week, to keep making like he's on the inside track, not merely with Jackie Gleason, Zsa Zsa Gabor, and Bill Saroyan, but Picasso ("the painter"), Corbusier ("the French architect"), and Albert Schweitzer. Archer Winsten, on the other hand—a film critic whose iconoclasms would not be uninteresting if his peculiar syntax didn't muffle them like oatmeal—goes to equally great pains to prove he's a reg'lar feller underneath it all; he's a ski enthusiast and on occasion contributes a column of ski notes to the sports section. Theater critic Richard Watts likes detective stories, Ireland, China without Chiang Kai-shek, and any pretty girl who ever breathed. He's given a chit-chat column every Tuesday in which to spread his cheer on them.

Dolly Schiff likes Israel (for the Israelis) and anyone of importance who treats her as of equal importance. For the *New York Post* is, among other things, an institution with a publisher whose political stances are in large part determined by whether she is buddy-buddied or cut dead by the high-society friends of the candidates—or, of course, by the candidates themselves. A publisher who will blithely pull the rug out from under her own editor a couple of hours before the final pre-election edition goes to press. And an editor who will take it, though he would not submit to Joe McCarthy. And the two of them who will explain it in full effusion and palship in their respective verbal domains for days on end.

The *New York Post* is an institution which aches with schizophrenia, self-erosion, and ambivalence—Jewish ambivalence—from stem to stern. Wechsler and Kempton are up in the clouds, Paul Sann has two feet firmly planted in the ground. Paul Sann is the executive editor; he fancies himself a character out of *The Front Page,* and it is he who every day makes sure that

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the rapists are right up in there with, and above, the eggheads. He is probably right: I choose to think that what anchors me to the paper is the Kempton-Shannon syndrome, but what I and my friends lap up no less avidly is the daily bilge about who's going with whom, who's quitting whom, who's seeing the doctor, who's getting hit over the head in hallways, how the B-girls are doing, what it was like the night Carlos didn't come home, the night Carmelita didn't come home, and what secrets Fern Marja or Gael Green have unearthed for us *this* week behind the sealed doors of the model agencies and reducing salons. All of which is also a part of our times, and it is too bad it can't somehow be isolated away from the information that the world is going to blow up and Mississippi take over the leavings at 3 o'clock tomorrow morning.

THE *New York Post* is schizophrenic because, like most newspapers, but more than most, it doesn't know who its audience is. Certainly its basic inheritance (from the '30's, from *PM*) is the Dissident Intellectual who in the current era has many dialectical schizophrenias of his own. An inheritance of higher passions and fewer qualms stems from the *Post*'s absorption, a decade ago, of the *Bronx Home News*; in a number of ways the *Post* has ever since had to serve as house organ for that volatile borough; certainly this is reflected throughout its classified columns where 75 per cent of its Help Wanteds and 98 per cent of its available Real Estate (apartments, stores, houses for sale) are in the Bronx. Still another huge and beckoning source of readership is Harlem; and finally, of course, there is the new ghetto society of half a million Puerto Ricans. The *Post* is the only big paper in town that is even remotely concerned in any true sense did they but know it—for far more of them gulp up the daily vitriol of the *News, Mirror,* and *Journal-American*—with what happens to New York's millions of Negroes and Puerto Ricans. It is more than concerned; it directly panders to them. This involves a double irony: it has not won them over—not yet, at any rate—and it has cost the paper an incalculable income in advertising withheld by the "quality" department stores who do not want to attract "the *Post's* sort of readers." (I should say *did* not, for as the Negro's purchasing power rises—perhaps, some day, even the Puerto Rican's—his acceptance as a customer likewise rises. But I think I will live a long time before I see a full page for Lord & Taylor opposite the full page for Abraham & Straus or Alexander's.) The *Post*, in short, is forced to play it to all fields at all times; the miracle is not that it is such an unholy *mishigas* of a newspaper—and a liberal newspaper yet!—but that it whatsoever survives as a newspaper, and even continues to bind its oldest familiars to its heart.

Why?

Because we too, we oldest familiars, still need some place to turn. Because we need, and deeply need, the high-strung and tireless mama that is the *New York Post*. She's *our* mama, that's what counts. She is the good indignant mama of New York City as the *New York Times* is its good gray papa. Papa goes down to the firm and makes the money while mama keeps things hopping in the Daughters of the Negev Anti-Poll-Tax and Sane Nuclear Society. Papa keeps us rich, mama keeps us honest. What in God's name would ever become of this city if mama were taken away from us, I do not know.

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THE PERSON ALONE

Barbara Probst Solomon

In Edward Albee's two-character play, *The Zoo Story*, the publisher asks the young man who accosts him in Central Park if he lives in the Village. The boy, who eventually forces the publisher to kill him in a desperate attempt to experience some human contact, replies that he lives in a rooming house on the Upper West Side. He describes the dreariness of his home and tells how he tried first to make a friend of the janitor's mangey dog, and when that didn't succeed, at least an enemy. Anything, anything, is his mute cry, just to be among the living. For Albee it is a shabby West Side rooming house; for Saul Bellow, in his somber *Seize the Day*, it is a run-down West Side hotel.

The West Side is not only the familiar sandwich with a hard crust on the Park and River sides of semi-fashionable large apartment houses, the homes of the wealthy Jewish middle-class of an older generation, and the soft in-between of slum avenues and side streets crowded with Irish and newly arrived Puerto Ricans. It is also a subtle composite including residents of no particular ethnic or economic group. The most notable recent change during the last decade has been the invasion of the neighborhood by actors, TV people and young couples who can no longer afford the Village (witness the tremendous success of the Reform Democrats here). But what is least apparent is that all along the West Side—from the fifties up to Morningside Heights, which is the home of students and professors, in the endless brownstones, whitestones, small tenements and once-upon-a-time well kept hotels of World War One vintage—lives, almost unnoticed, the anonymous wanderer, the single person hopelessly lost in the city.

In canvassing the neighborhood during an election one expects to meet, all in their proper habitat, the Puerto Ricans, the Irish, the Jews, and now, the young marrieds. As you climb up the last flight of stairs of some battered five-story brownstone you recognize the peculiar stale odor that emanates from the rooms of old people; the underweared, housecoated recluses who have a bit of a job or a tiny pension, some at the bottle, some fussing over eggs at the stove, some reading and rereading yesterday's newspaper. Then there are the countless times you knock at a door, and this comes as a real shock, you are confronted over and over again by a neatly dressed young man or woman immobilized in a small clean room. Their expression is a strange mixture of expectancy and resignation—almost as though they are waiting for the world to come in and find them. Despite the vast numbers of young people living alone in this broad area there is little in the neighborhood that indicates their silent presence. You don't see many of them on the street, there is maybe one genu-

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ine café in a sixty block radius and hardly any bookstores.

WHO ARE THEY and why do they come here? Most are from out-of-town. In the past few years there are more and more foreigners, as students from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, in a turn-about trend are now discovering America. Since the Village is becoming the home of the well-heeled, and has always had more apartments to offer than rooms, it is now uptown for the true transient. He is neither rich, chic nor shrewd enough to "make it" midtown or on Bleecker. His plans are indefinite, he has no roommate to split the costs so it is useless to lease or sublet a real apartment. In the newspaper ads the rooms on the West Side appear the most inviting. Low rents, good space and one can pay by the week or month. No furniture is necessary. A few paperbacks, a plant, and some dishes from Woolworth's and you're in. You are convenient to subways, it's nice to be near a river, nice to be near a park—as for the bleakness, the shabby atmosphere, you assume this is the way of the city, you know no different. What the stranger doesn't realize is that it is fatal to be alone in the city and to have found no "style."

The worst off are the almost-talented. These are the discontented who are not discontented enough; the adventurous who are not adventurous enough; the seekers who are unsure of what they are seeking. As men are more quickly forced to resolve themselves in their work, it is particularly the young women who flounder in this nether-nether land. They take mediocre jobs during the day and by night haunt the lectures, the courses. Those who neither leave the city nor "make it," curling inward in a shy defeat, find a less threatening existence. They become nursery school teachers, social workers, salesgirls in arty bookshops. If they have some money perhaps they take an MA. What they do not find —these girls who do not wish to become suburban matrons but who do not possess either the shrewdness to become chic careerists or enough vitality and sense of self to become true individualists—is the sympathetic way of life they assumed the city could give the "sensitive" person.

As for the genuine bohemian or intellectual (a group so unsure of its own existence that the American language has never had a fitting noun: student? bohemian? intellectual?), though they are drawn to the city, the city is not always equally drawn to them. In the flat, arid time from which we are just pulling out, life for the intellectual has been particularly hard. The pall McCarthyism cast over the country not only instilled fear but in all sorts of intangible ways robbed the younger generation of communication with those who preceded them. Political lethargy, prosperity, plus the fantastically young marriage age, which is directly related to the political and economic framework, has all had a numbing and disrupting impact on the youth of the city. The person between twenty and thirty who is past college age yet not completely adult, who is neither married nor a homosexual finds he is almost a misfit. Thus, the abrasive effect of what should be the true formative years is being experienced only by a tiny "odd ball" minority—a minority tragically forced to grow up alone.

NOT ONLY is there no moral home for the person who comes to the city, there is also no physical home—no place to go. The West Side, which in recent

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years has become the habitat of the artist, writer, musician and intellectual, as well as the footloose floater, barely recognizes the existence of this "subterranean" population. Where does one go to talk? I remember a particularly frustrating afternoon when I wished to discuss a manuscript with a friend—we walked along the Upper West Side finding 1) cafeterias where you couldn't smoke, 2) bars that were too dark, and anyway we didn't want to drink, 3) restaurants that expected you to order a full meal. We ended, incongruously, chatting in the stilted atmosphere of the lobby of a large once-grand hotel.

In place of the European cafe, where with a little initiative and the price of a coffee you can meet your own generation, we have instead the specialized school for the non-specialist. I believe that one of the reasons the Art and Drama schools have become so popular in the past ten years is that they provide a safe haven for the wanderer, a world within a world. The new type of actor is not so much a member of the economically underprivileged seeking a short cut to fame, but the "poet actor." This is the person who desires, more than fame and money, to "find himself." One of the great appeals of the Method, is that as a school it offered tolerance for the unrooted, the kind of person who in different times might never have considered being an actor. One of its great limitations, however, is that its appeal rested on a private emotional situation that has nothing to do with the theater.

Of all the artists, the writer has suffered most during this period. He has no natural place of congregation such as the concert hall, the art gallery, or the theater where he can meet his contemporaries. Traditionally, he learns his craft through his own experience. The writer is the first to feel the pinch of political repression, and he is especially harmed by the rigid separation of the university "academic intellectual" from the "creative personality."

THE STRONG THEME of the past decade in all the Arts—painting, sculpture, writing, the theater—has been the isolation of the individual caught in the prison of an overcrowded but lonely civilization. Why does the person alone, the artist, the intellectual, persist in coming to New York if life here is so hard? Because life in the rest of the United States is even worse; and here in the city there is always the magic possibility of sudden change. Why do writers and artists stay less long in Europe than they did in the

Ugly?

Those who call New York ugly . . . have simply failed to make the necessary change of registration. Objectively, no doubt, New York is a city, and can be judged as one; but the spectacle which it offers to a European sensibility is of a different order of grandeur: that of European landscape; whereas American landscape offers us, in its turn, an urban beauty. It results from the creation of a new kind of city: an artificial landscape in which the principles of urbanism no longer operate. And our eye will adapt itself at once, if we do not inhibit it, to this new landscape, in which the values that count are those of the velvety light, the sharpness of the far distances, the sublimity of the skyscraper and the shaded valleys in which the many colored motorcars lie strewn like flowers.—Claude Levi-Strauss, "Journey to the Edge of Our Jungle," *Encounter,* February, 1961.

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twenties and thirties? Because, for better or worse, we are a world power. New York may represent the "decline of the Roman Empire," but it is Rome nevertheless. In all its violent electric beauty of buildings, bridges, mechanization and its infinity of nameless people, with all the virtues and vices of this time, it is the true twentieth-century city.

Experimental theaters, bookstores and cafes are now springing up where before there was nothing; students are beginning to picket Woolworth's and oppose Civil Defense programs where before they were silent. One sees this and hopes that in the next decade things will be more open. Yet despite some improvements, loneliness in the city is, unfortunately, never a mere question of decades. This is not a "scandal" one can get angry about or protest nor is it a condition that a committee can correct. I remember being eighteen and hearing for the first time in the warmth of a Paris cafe the word alienation. Everyone was violently disagreeing with one another about the meaning of the word, but essentially they were all speaking the same language. And I remember coming back to New York with its rooming houses, its poverty and prosperity, its fabulous life and its nothing life, and discovering, emotionally, what the word meant.

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"SHE THOUGHT THE RUSSIANS WAS COMING"*

Norman Mailer

I first went down to Brooklyn to see the gang on a bone-cold February afternoon this year. They were waiting for Bruce Davidson and me in a candy store about a half mile from their turf, a parlor they had begun to use lately because their own was too small. The new place had a juke box, and three booths to the rear, and when we entered five or six girls and a dozen boys were milling around in the back.

For the first minute, a bit of tension: nothing all-out hostile, more an air of stony curiosity, studied on their part, studied on mine. One cannot get around it—there are situations which belong more to the movies than to life, and all of us were obeying an archetypal scene in a gangster movie or a Western—a stranger had come to visit.

This mood shifted quickly enough. Bruce had already told the Royal Dealers, which is the fictitious name we might as well use, that *Esquire* magazine had bought his pictures. (For a year he had been friendly with these kids and the sight of him with the Leica up to his face had come to seem as natural as lighting a cigarette.) Now a few of them had been let in on the new information that a writer was here today to write them up, and this explanation for my presence passed around quickly. They were picked up by it. Conversation began to go, and before fifteen minutes we had found a common ground; we were passing back and forth our prescriptions for odd kicks.

Had I ever heard of ground aspirin being mixed with tobacco and rolled in a cigarette?

No; that one I hadn't heard of.

"That's the most, man—I was out of my skull for two hours."

"You creep, you're a fag," said one of the kids to the kid who had been out of his skull.

"No, man, that aspirin is a boss kick."

Laughter. General derision. It seems somebody had offered marijuana to the kid with the aspirin and he had punked out.

So the stories went. Whitey had taken fifteen saccharine tablets once. "Man, that's a drag. I was throwing up all afternoon," said Whitey.

We discussed dried leaves, and nutmeg, and Sterno; one of them had even heard of a way to find some juice in lighter fluid.

Then talk shifted to the Dealer's account of a rumble they had been in last summer, a big rumble which made the newspapers. Ten of them had been brought to court for beating up a kid in the park, and they

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were now on probation. Since none of them were going to school any more, they were using up a good part of the money they had made at work to pay off their various lawyers. One of the kids was talking now about his case. Not a member of the Royal Dealers, he had gotten into trouble for something else.

"What's your lawyer charging you?" Whitey asked. Although he was the smallest of the Juniors, a thin, brooding kid of sixteen with clean, proud features, he seemed the natural leader.

"Two and a half," said the other.

"Two and a half bucks?"

A sneer. "Two and a half cents."

"What'll you get?"

"I don't know."

"A year, you bastard. You deserve a year."

I never found out what the act had been. Conversation turned back to the rumble. The Dealers had been cutting through the park last summer when they saw a Puerto Rican gang which had eyes for them. One of the seniors was with them, Terry, a big kid about twenty who had done some boxing in the Army and had natural military ability. He collected the Dealers in a nest of bushes at the peak of a small hill, and sent four of the Juniors down to serve as decoys on the paved path in the draw below, a run of thirty or forty yards down the hill. It had seemed close enough, but when the Puerto Rican gang attacked, they struck so suddenly that the decoys were dropped hard. One of them got a baseball bat on the side of his skull, and bled badly. He was unconscious by the time Terry led the charge. But the Dealers' cavalry took the day. The Juniors, beefed by Terry the Senior, beat up on the Puerto Ricans. After forty seconds the other gang was in flight. Terry picked up the decoy with the bleeding head, and carried him under his arm all the way out of the park. Whitey, who has heart in a rumble, was the last to leave—he gave a final clout to the casualty he had been fighting, and said, "This is from the Dealers."

Back to their turf by separate ways, they had all collected in the candy store. I could hear how their voices must have sounded, because in combat, after a fire-fight, we would all be a little hysterical, and would all be laughing and singing out at once about what had happened to us and how, and where we had been. Those were some of the few good moments in the war. So the Dealers had been staking out their claims in the candy store for star roles in the gang legend of the battle. They were home from the war, and full of charge. They would have new cartel with the chicks.

But the police have the Greek sense of Nemesis. The siren of a squad car sounded outside the door of the candy store. "This is from the Dealers," Whitey had made the mistake of saying, and the kid who had been left by the gang which lost gave the message to the cops when they arrived on the scene at the park.

It was a dull, hot, newsless day in summer, so it made the newspapers. All too inaccurately according to the Dealers. Ten vicious juvenile

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delinquents beat up a cripple, went the jazz. "Hell, man, it wasn't like that at all," one of them said, "it was a fair rumble." We'll never know. Once a newspaper touches a story, the facts are lost forever, even to the protagonists.

Now it was February, a quiet scene. Since that rumble, the Dealers have been cooling it. Of necessity. But talk of the rumble had stirred them up. Not long afterward, we went out of the candy store into the iron-grey cold, and took the subway down to Coney Island. A couple of Dealers were going to get tattoos.

We had just missed a train and it was empty on the subway platform. The kids began to put on a production for me. Ricky, a short, heavy Italian kid went out to the very end of the station, and urinated on the tracks. There were jokes about hitting the third rail, and when they got to the point of saying what Ricky would lose, and how little he would lose, he turned to the others, about five of them, and pulled out a Japanese knife, one of those small, sharp, steak knives which are inserted into a wooden scabbard and cost about a dollar, and he waved it at us, and ran up the platform stairs about ten steps. "You guys think I'm not tough. Come up here and I'll kill you. I'll kill the first one. I'm Al Capone—you watch out for me." And a good imitation it was, of Rod Steiger as Al Capone.

I had a water pistol in my pocket, a small model of a short-barreled forty-five which I had taken on impulse earlier in the day from Bruce Davidson who had been about to drop it in a trash barrel. I flipped it up the subway stairs to Ricky, shouting, "Quick, man, here's a gun." In the air, it looked real, and Ricky had a natural look of dismay, not knowing whether to catch or to drop it, and if it were loaded would it go off? Or was it a gag? That much went over his face, and then he dropped it, and the gun made a tinny, clanking little sound, the inimitable sound of a toy, and the other Dealers roared in mockery. But Ricky had talent and for a young actor he can use a prop with the best. The gun went into his right hand, the knife into his left, and the brown scabbard for the steak knife went into his mouth like a cigar. "All right," he said, lining us up with the gun, waving it like a movie murderer, "this is the St. Valentine's Day massacre. You're all dead. In one minute you're all gonna get it. Bop. Bop. Bop. Bop"—mowing us down. Johnny, one of the best fighters in the Dealers, about eighteen, good-looking, a little taller than the rest, rushed him, and they scuffled on the stairs, Ricky at a disadvantage because he had to put down the knife. Just then a train came in. It was going in the wrong direction, but it was the right kind of diversion. Ricky broke loose from Johnny, ran down the stairs back to the platform, and approached the open door of the train. A ten-year-old kid was sitting across the aisle, and Ricky waved the gun at him through the open door. The kid took it well, half-scared, half-grinning, and then the door closed, and Ricky began to walk along the platform, rapping on windows in order to study the expression of the people who turned around to see a gun about three feet from their mouth. If street robbery were a trade, this could serve as apprenticeship, for one might learn

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quickly which types will freeze and which will not when an adolescent is pointing a gun at them. Ricky had time for four or five close, quick studies before the train picked up too much speed. Then one of the other Dealers pushed him from behind and scared him royally because he was only two feet from the side of the moving train, and the distance was halved before he recovered. Then Whitey, Johnny, and the first Dealer took hold of Ricky and made a play of pushing him into the train, but Ricky broke loose—six inches from contact with the moving side wall of the subway car—and started to shoot again at all of us. "Bop, bop, bop. Bee-owww—" offering us ricochets as well. Johnny went over and whispered something to him. As Ricky bent over to listen, Johnny backhanded him in the belly, and then ducked back as Ricky tried to slug him on the arm.

Our train came in. We had a car almost to ourselves, and all the way to Coney Island they asked me questions about combat. How many grenades had I carried? How many would they let you carry? Had I ever killed anybody? Did I carry a gun now? And vague talk of pot. Johnny had a dream. He would collect two pounds of pot, and then he would go away for a couple of years and travel around the country—there were a lot of things he wanted to do once he got on the road. It turned out he was the reader in the Dealers. He was reading *The Beat Generation And The Angry Young Men* now, and he liked Kerouac. He had been trying to read my piece, *The White Negro* in that anthology, but it was too hard. "It's deep. Like I know, man, you got to think," he told me with a grin.

That day, Davidson and I stayed with them at the tattoo parlor while Whitey and another bought new tattoos. Medical science has come to the tattoo parlor, and the inner sanctum was in surgical white with sterilizers and antiseptic procedure. But love of the tattoo is a subject in itself, and I don't know that I am the one to write about it. Leave it that the kids covet and worry every choice of a tattoo the way a bride picks each piece of furniture for her bedroom. The fear of making a mistake is heavy, because a coiled serpent on the arm demands that you develop the strength of a serpent or else you're a phony, and a Betty Boop on the calf—well, you might end up marrying Betty Boop.

A couple of nights later in a bar Ricky said "I'm going to put a naked dame on my arm."

"What'll your wife say when you get married?"

He didn't hesitate a minute. "I'll put her name under it."

But then some of the Dealers have a gone wit when they're drunk. I met Terry that night, a big one, twenty as I mentioned, with a black leather jacket, good features, blank face, and a string of bon mots. The longer we drank, the faster they came. "You know who I'd like to make," he told me; "one of those jazz singers. I'd like to make her right on the floor while she's singing. I'd like to drill her." Talking of the past and past happiness he said, "She had a set of knockers on her would choke a mule—she was boss, man." But the best I remember was the tale of his evening with a society girl: "When I came up to her door in my hopped-

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up '50 Mercury, va va, hoo hoo, hmmm, she thought the Russians was coming." Much later that night, at three in the morning, we took a race through the park in my no-longer-hopped-up '53 Studebaker, Bruce Davidson, Terry, Johnny and myself, and Terry led me to the historic ground where the Dealers had their apocalyptic rumble and he went over the terrain with me, the two of us reconsidering the problem like old Civil War generals warm with nostalgia. It was a good night.

Altogether I saw the Dealers three times. The last trip I took my wife, and a friend and his girl, to one of their dances, but the evening never came off right, because the air of decorum was heavy. I had been promised in advance that a fight would start that night, but it never did. The dance was given by another club in a veterans' hall, and the Dealers were only one of four or five gangs present so everybody had to be on best behavior, and the evening ended early—a couple of kids pulled out the rubber plugs in the tanks on the water closets in the men's room. That flooded the floor, and in disgust the bartenders closed the dance down early. We took Terry, Johnny and Whitey back to the Village to hear some jazz, but they were off their turf and subdued that night.

IT OCCURS TO ME, as I read over what I have written, that this piece is anti-climactic. I wonder if that is not right. Because I sometimes think the drama of the rumbler, the would-be rumbler, and the adolescent along for the ride is not too far away from the sweat of any artist, any salesman, any adventurer, any operator. Their imagination is too vivid, and so they spend the days and nights of their adolescent years waiting for the apocalyptic test which almost never comes off. It is common in any editorial about juvenile delinquents to speak of wasted lives and growing blight, but what junk these editorials are, for there is not one root to juvenile delinquency, but two. For all the talk of broken homes, submarginal housing, overcrowding in the schools and cultural starvation, the other root is more alive, and one kills it at one's peril. It is the root for which our tongues once found the older words of courage, loyalty, honor and the urge for adventure. It may be that when one gets to know them well, some of the Dealers are bad pieces of work, but I would gamble that most of them are rather good pieces of work, bright, sensitive to what is true and what is not true in what you say to them, loyal if they like you, and in congress together they are as alive as a pack of monkeys. They suffer from only one disease, the national disease—it is boredom. If their conversation runs the predictable riverbed of sex, gang war, drugs, weapons, movies and crazy drunks, well, at least they live out a part of their conversational obsession, which is more than one can say for the quiet, inhibited, middle-aged desperadoes of the corporation and the suburb. If we are to speak of shadows which haunt America today, the great shadow is that there is a place for everybody in our country who is willing to live the way others want him to, and talk the way others want him to, with our big, new, thick, leaden vocabulary of political, psychological, and sociological verbiage. Yes, there is a place for everybody now in the American scene except for those who want to find the limits of their growth by a life which is ready to welcome a little danger as part of the Divine cocktail.

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THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT AND THE MYTHIC HERO

Harry Slochower

In *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* Ernst Cassirer argues that the distinguishing characteristic of man is his symbolizing activity. While the animal responds to signs and finds satisfaction in the manipulation and incorporation of physical objects, man also needs, and has the capacity to find, substitute gratifications in symbolic communication—through the sciences, philosophy, religion, and above all, the arts. Now, errant or delinquent behavior is also a form of symbolic communication. As Freud suggested, there is a connection between symbol and symptom; only a very fine line divides genius and pathology. Writers, such as Thomas Mann, have viewed the artist as a borderline case and shown his inner relationship to the criminal. In his personality and behavior the criminal may often reveal, though in a distorted and sometimes brutal form, those same impulses of rebellion which move the artist and which the artist embodies in his hero. These impulses represent the *productive* and *usable* elements of deviant conduct. Just as in therapy we address ourselves to the intact ego of the patient, so in regard to juvenile delinquency and adult crime, we must seek out these elements, and assist in their redirection.

I

As a dramatic illustration of this point, I want to recall an incident which occurred in New York about six years ago. It involves a gang leader, Jack Koslow, and his victim Willard Menter.

On the night of August 19, 1954, Koslow and three other Brooklyn boys met and talked vaguely of what to do. Walking aimlessly, they came across Willard Menter, a Negro, sleeping on a park bench. Koslow held a lit match to Menter's feet and then, pulling him up, told him to come along. The group walked to a pier near the Williamsburg Bridge in Brooklyn. There, Mittman, Koslow's buddy, hit Menter and when the Negro ducked Koslow's follow-up punch, he fell into the water where he was left to drown.

What made a deep impression on me when I read Marya Mannes's account in *The Reporter* (January 27, 1955), as well as Dr. Fredric Wertham's book about Frank Santana (*The Circle of Guilt*) was that

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the acts of these boys were carried out in a mechanical, passionless manner which brought them no relief or catharsis. Koslow was not after Menter's money. This particular Negro meant nothing to him, nor was he an adversary against whom a "victory" could bring glory. Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* has some cause for personal resentment against the woman with whom he has pawned his watch; so has Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas in *Native Son* who feels humiliated by his social status among the whites. In Koslow's and Santana's case, however, we find no similar motive. Why then did they kill? Koslow told Dr. Wertham:

> I'm a fascist and a white supremacist. Everybody is really. That's all the talk you hear around anyway. . . . Violence? It's everywhere. All I'm interested in is violence—destruction—death.

And Frank Santana:

> War pictures, gangsters, crime. . . . People are killed in all the pictures.

One of the motivations for delinquent behavior is a desire to assume a heroic role, in order to compensate for the feeling of so many young people that they don't belong, that they aren't important enough. Among the insignia the gangs adopt are Supermen, Panthers, Dragons, Tarzans, Enchanters, Devils, Rebels. Of the delinquents who have come to my attention, Jack Koslow comes closest to a distorted figure of a mythic hero, suggested by his intense interest in Greek mythology.

Jack was a highly gifted boy with an IQ of 135 when he was 9 years old. He was in a class of "gifted children" and made high school in 3 years. He did not suffer economic privation and came from a fairly stable home, although he hated his father for beating him. Despite these relatively favorable circumstances, Jack became a drifter, went from job to job, finding fault with everybody. From June 1954 on, he was unemployed and lived as "a bum."

When Koslow was asked to characterize his activity, he said:

> Just hit or miss. . . . He looks at you out of one eye. It's disgusting. It incites me to hit him.

Wasn't Koslow's disgust with being looked at "out of one eye" disgust with an aspect of himself? Wasn't his war against bums a war against his own hated identity as a bum? He said of the murder: "I had to do it to preserve my individuality"—a formulation strikingly similar to Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov who killed to prove himself, "to have the daring." And when the Negro fell into the water, Koslow cried out: "Now, we're all murderers," expressing thereby not only the need to socialize his guilt, but also to confess himself a murderer. His self-assertion was also a self-accusation, meant to invite retaliation. A Jewish boy, he cried "Heil Hitler" and said he loved the Nazis. We are reminded of Freud's tenet that criminality comes from a sense of guilt and is an unconscious desire to be apprehended. The delinquent identifies himself with the very au-

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thority against which he rebels, fears his own drives and seeks punishment. Frank Santana expressed this idea when he told Dr. Wertham that the creeps "made the person who die rise up again and kill the guy who killed."*

Koslow claimed that nobody could get him and that therefore he need not take precautions. The artlessness with which the juvenile delinquent betrays his act entails what Erik Erikson calls a "confession-compulsion." The powerlessness which he exhibits and the punishment which he invites at once appease the super-ego, "prove" that the parent-figure is evil and provide masochistic pleasure. Masochism is, indeed, indicated in the case of Koslow. He confined his attacks to older men, especially Negroes, that is, parent figures with sensuous components. And the two drawings he made at Raymond Street jail of a Grecian baker and a female Egyptian dancer provide supportive material for his pseudo-aggressive defense against sensuousness. The following analysis of the two drawings owes credit to a clinical psychologist, Karen Machover:

> Orality is suggested by Koslow's choice of a baker and by the large breasts of the dancer. Sadism is most apparent in the male figure which is poised with the precision and final readiness for a perfect killing. It also emerges from Koslow's craftsmanship. The two nudes are drawn in severe economic lines, precisely proportioned, with complete absence of sensuous effect. There is no hair on the male and only the barest indication of a severe hair-do on the female. The hands and feet of the dancer are fingerless and held away from the body. The baker holds what Koslow called a baker's trowel and the female appears in a stiff dancing position. On her fingerless right hand rests a dove with sharply pointed wings.
>
> The effect of the pictures is of attempted perfectionism, of figures insulated from their earthy environment and denuded of sensuousness. The two drawings seem polar opposites: Whereas the dancer has no pupils, appears static, passive, dead, the baker is angry and fierce. Yet, the rigidity of the baker, from the lunging lines of his stance to the position of his trowel, also suggests a kind of "rigor mortis." It is as if he were paralyzed in panic over his attraction for sensuousness and stands ready to demolish or to exorcize it.
>
> Koslow identified his figures as Grecian and Egyptian. The first indicates Greek homosexuality as well as Hellenic sensuousness, both of which he was in dread of. Again, in the Egyptian dancer, he combines death-like rigidity with sensuous breasts. In passing it might be noted that this admirer of Greek mythological heroes drew one heel of his Greek baker in a manner suggesting a stumped or wounded heel—a kind of Achilles heel.

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* Here, Koslow and Santana sense that their behavior is, in part, the internalization of the very ruling symbols against which it is directed. Thus, the delinquent's herostratic tendency, his unconscious shifting of blame from the parental to the social image has some legitimacy. At the same time, the juvenile delinquent attempts to retaliate against the injustice done him, replacing the helpless victim with himself, as a child.

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II

We now come to the conscious or unconscious identification by the gang leader with some mythic hero and its relation to his form of rebellion.

The mythic hero, necessarily moving into conflict with his authoritative code, becomes "the dangerous child": he steals and commits incest and patricide. For this crime, he suffers expulsion and must go on a "journey." And here we can see the first striking contrast between the hero in mythopoesis and the juvenile delinquent—a contrast in the manner of their quest. Whereas the Koslows go through their acts in a listless apathetic way, Job, Prometheus, Aeneas, Don Quixote, Faust and others do what they feel they *must* do, *believing* in their mission. A second contrast is in the form and direction of the "journey." In the premodern mythopoeic works from Job to Dante, we know that the wanderer will come home at the end. Homecoming is assured because, in his very rebellion, the hero represents the symbols of his group in a higher phase. With the loss of communal identification in the Renaissance, however, and with the more unqualified attempt of the individual to be "free," homecoming becomes more tenuous, as with Hamlet, Ahab and Kafka's K. Yet, in contrast to the "trickster" who is bent merely on narcissistic gratification, the hero becomes *a culture hero* to the extent that he recognizes the deeper values of his society. That is, the hero in mythopoesis *learns from his crime and his suffering,* learns to "know himself" and to re-channel his infantile self-assertion or his submission, thereby widening and strengthening his ego. This becomes possible through knowledge and consciousness, knowledge of his own motives and consciousness of the excess in his quest. Because the victory of the mythic hero is the victory of consciousness, it makes possible his rehabilitation in the group.

At the same time, the hero's challenge quickens and transforms the original static or rotten society. In this sense, he becomes the instrument of social salvation, his sacrifice making manifest the changes necessary for the welfare of the group. In his quest and through his self-sacrifice, the hero acts for the non-heroic. He rescues his society from mummified tradition and, in the end, he is sanctified. Such blessedness is awarded Job and Prometheus, Oedipus and Virgil, Don Quixote (in La Mancha) and Hamlet (in Horatio's prayer), Mann's Joseph and Judah. In the last stage, the rebellious hero can accept his society, which has been humanized by his rebellion: Aeschylus' Agamemnon and Clytemnestra are replaced by Apollo and Athena, Sophocles' Laios by Theseus, Virgil's Troy by Rome, Faust's Gothic heritage by utopian socialism.

Among mythopoeic heroes, Melville's Captain Ahab and Cervantes' Don Quixote stand out through their apparently meaningless quests. Ahab persists in an apparently senseless pursuit of a whale and acts in such a way as to bring on punishment. The Don assaults people indiscriminately and without any provocation, attacks consequences without examining causes. Although he owns only a barber's basin and a humble steed, and is accompanied by an ordinary peasant, he would like to be

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regarded as a famous knight who rebels against an "iron age." He too would be his own law, claiming that "knight-errants are beyond all jurisdiction, their only law their swords, while their charter is their mettle and their will in their decrees." His manner of exacting justice brings injustice; his own activity brings on retaliation. Again, like the delinquent, the Don is not concerned with practical gains, but only with the exhibition of his courage. The juvenile's feeling that he is fighting ghostly corporate powers has its analogue in Quixote's battle against giants concealed as windmills. The pre-Renaissance mythic hero had found favorable conditions for integrating his quest with the needs of the community. By the time of Cervantes, however, the ordered world offering divine or secular guidance had given way to a diffusion of national interests and a confusion of authority. The Don can no longer find trusted guides and tries to chart his own way and prove himself by his own deeds.

Reading about Jack Koslow and his loyal buddy Melvin Mittman suggests the analogy to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Jack is described as having delicately ugly features, tall and thin with a narrow head and a long thin nose. He was the strategist of the group whose aim was to wipe all bums from the earth. In contrast, Melvin has a solid, barrel-like body, with blunt features and wide shoulders. It was Melvin who hit the Negro; Jack only swung in his direction. Yet, it was Jack's "airy" blow which was finally effective. (Mittman may be regarded as the bodily, "female" aspect of Koslow, as Sancho is Quixote's; in Cervantes' novel, Sancho cries easily; in the courtroom, Mittman wept throughout the trial.)

But here the analogy ends. The contemporary delinquent—living in an era of social cacophony, what Robert Merton (following Durkheim) calls a state of *Anomie* or the contradiction and breakdown of norms—has difficulty in finding an ego-ideal. In contrast, Don Quixote could still draw on the memory of "a Golden Age" for his passion and action. He could still be convinced that there are firm norms of good and evil, that Dulcinea exists, that beauty, honor, peace, justice, equality and freedom are worth fighting for. Because the Don retains his vision, he gains the support of the villagers, converts Sancho and even the Bachelor. Our delinquent has no poem, such as Dulcinea, no realistic folk-guide, such as Sancho, and no similar village support. He stands alone.

III

Despite the dislocations in the contemporary scene which condition juvenile delinquency, we need to recognize that delinquency has a positive function for the adolescent and that it contains an oblique social value.

The gang is the hard narrow core which provides the adolescent with a personal and social identification he cannot find on the "outside." Here, he can "cooperate" within a sub-society whose members are brought together by their shared experiences. Here, he can be "moral," for the gang has its own strict code of ethics, demanding absolute loyalty,

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and severely punishing stool-pigeons. Through the gang, he can enact a Robin Hood kind of social justice. Here, he can be "a man," while avoiding personal responsibility since the crime is ordered by the leader. Erikson suggests that the delinquent escapes neurotic regression in that gang-rites forbid showing guilt, shame and remorse.

Moreover, the very negative behavior in delinquency incorporates a certain hidden affirmation of social values. Erikson offers the term "negative identity" to connote behavior which is disapproved by authority. He points out that the adolescent needs to go through the stage of negative identification, that to establish a strong ego, he must emancipate himself from infantile identification. I would suggest that he—and especially the gang leader—does this by playing the game of being a magical-mythic hero. He attempts to break down the prison which separates him from others, and to establish communication. And if he is to be victimized, he wants to feel—in the mode of the suicide and the existentialist—that he *himself* is choosing the manner in which this is to happen. In these various ways, the delinquent proclaims his individual identity and thus gives meaning to his life.

Now, such dissidence is a recurrent characteristic of mythopoeic heroes and of prophet-artists, from Dionysus to Thomas Mann's Joseph, from Aeschylus to Nietzsche, Shaw and perhaps the Beatniks. It is, indeed, the necessary condition of the critical spirit without which corporate bodies tend to be ossified into totalitarian conformity. *Society needs the dissidents* and ought to support, if not subsidize them. For they prevent its body from growing fat and lethargic, help to galvanize its energies and revivify its traditional values towards a dynamic humanism. This is the reason why the mythopoeic rebel is dignified in tragedy which presents his revolt and fall as a sacrifice for the reinvigoration of the community. The rehabilitation of the hero in mythopoesis is contingent on his maintaining the very qualities which enter into his "crime": Job, who questions the ways of the Lord, is uplifted, not the Friends who urge submission; Oedipus, without surrendering his violent feelings, becomes the Savior-figure, not the just and kindly Theseus; Hamlet, not Horatio, emerges as "a noble heart"; Judah, not Joseph, receives the final blessing from Jacob in Thomas Mann's epic.

We need to shift our focus from the pathology of juvenile delinquency to the creative energies it expresses in a distorted form. Its leaders harbor the productive possibilities found in the classical or brigand heroes they attempt to imitate. By opening up avenues of symbolic action in art, literature and social criticism, these energies can be redirected towards useful activity. Personal and social pressures led Jack Koslow to imitate the vampires of Greek mythology. Moderation of these pressures could give the Koslows a chance to act, not in the manner of the social satyr, but of the culture hero.

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THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFLICT GANG

In New York City, gangs differ in size, membership, dress, objectives, choice of weapons, and protocol. The essential element that binds each gang together and gives it a characteristic flavor is its leadership. Around the leaders boys who do not have an abiding interest in the gang.

Typically leadership rests in the hands of three or four boys who are the acknowledged heads of the gang. They are generally the older boys and reach their positions by dint of aggressiveness, physical prowess, and daring. Whether to fight other groups or pursue another course is usually decided arbitrarily by the leaders without consulting the other gang members who are expected to follow along. Contrary to popular belief, however, *most fighting gangs are not tightly knit groups with a stable organizational superstructure*; frequently, except for a hard-core top echelon, they are composed of different cliques whose loyalty to the leadership and the gang is qualified. Although friendships and shared feelings bind the gang together, competing individual loyalties and rivalries complicate the network of relationships among its members. Frequently these undercurrents weaken the unity of the gang and cause cliques to split off. Because of its relatively loose and undefined structure, one expert in the field has characterized the conflict gang as a "near-group." •

While leadership brings increased status and reputation within the gang, the hazards accompanying it are equally high. Since the leaders are the most aggressive boys and the most sought after by the police, their chances of retaining a long-term grip on the gang are greatly diminished. When a gang becomes actively engaged in street fighting, tension builds up and the tenure of the leaders becomes even more precarious. The arrest of a gang leader or his inability to maintain authority creates a void at the top which others who are vying for leadership attempt to fill. . . .

Most gangs contain a small core of active members which becomes enlarged when trouble is imminent. The recruits are boys who identify with the gang and tag along when the leader issues a general call of arms. Included among them are boys who join for protection or are drafted against their will. For many boys it becomes as difficult to leave the gang as it was in the first place to stay out of it. In East Harlem and several other neighborhoods, at least a nominal allegiance to one gang may be necessary for . . . a measure of security.

In order to increase its power and security from opposing groups, the gang constantly seeks new members and exercises a careful vigil over its "turf" or territory. Whether the turf is as broad as a whole neighborhood or confined to the vicinity of a candy store, members of the gang are careful not to stray outside it, and members of a rival gang move about in it at the risk of being attacked. . . .

Generally, crime for profit is a minor occurrence in conflict gangs, notwithstanding the poverty from which these boys come. Destruction of property is generally wanton and promiscuous; murder or bodily injury is the payoff for a personal grudge, a real or fancied insult, or a gratuitous act, as when an innocent young passerby, because of mistaken identity or untimely presence, is made a victim of circumstance. This seemingly senseless behavior is the reaction of defiant youth alienated from society. It is sometimes also a means for achieving upward mobility and a "rep" for a youth who is deprived or believes he is deprived of these opportunities in the over-all social system.

—*From Interim Report, see page 338.*

• Lewis Yablonsky, "The Delinquent Gang as a Near-Group," *Social Problems*, VII, No. 2 (Fall, 1959), pp. 108-117.

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THE COMMON HARVESTMAN

Margaret Halsey

"Me kill Daddy-Wong-Wegs!"

An idle conversation had lapsed comfortably into silence. Jessica was sitting in a state of summer-afternoon vacancy when the child's voice and the mother's quick reply aroused her.

"Oh, no, darling, I wouldn't do that."

The expressive smile and attentive turning of the head which Ruth Fleming bestowed on her youngest child struck Jessica as "actressy," and she thought to herself that at almost five, Eric ought to be talking more distinctly.

However, since these ideas were not legal tender, she merely leaned back and glanced appreciatively at her surroundings. Ruth's patio, where they sat, was both shaded and presided over by willow, elm and tulip trees. Jessica thought nothing more beautiful than trees in summer, and responded gratefully to their atmosphere of stability and leisure. At the same time, she was aware that if only God can make a tree, only a neighborhood association that fights like the Army of Northern Virginia can save them—if they happen to be growing forty minutes by express from the Grand Central.

The trees, however, were background. In the foreground, on the grass beyond the patio, were a see-saw, a sandbox, a set of swings and a jungle gym—all of them weathered. Visibly new was an inflated plastic wading pool. Five or six children of appropriate ages were engaged with these aids to leisure, and on the rough-cut stretch beyond the lawn, some older boys were playing softball.

"Me kill Daddy-Wong-Wegs!" repeated Eric, making a tentative dab with his foot.

Jessica, glancing down, said "No!" and automatically put out her hand to hold Eric off. The Daddy-Long-Legs was on the pavement about a yard away from her foot. One of the Eastern religions—she could never remember which—forbids all taking of life and in Jessica, it had a near-convert. Though she was the mother of male twins, aged twelve, and therefore did not live a contemplative life, she had never been able to get used to the idea of living tissue as expendable.

Eric's response to her exclamation was simply an absent-minded glance, but it reminded Jessica of something she did not wish to forget. Good relations with Ruth, she knew, depended on making no comments whatsoever about the Fleming children. On more or less pretending, in

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fact, that they did not exist. But the Flemings were civilized and literate and liberal, and it was worth it.

"Now, sweetie, don't be a mean wittle kid."

Ruth's attitude was still easy and good-natured, and Jessica—though knowing from experience how this minuscule drama would probably unfold—was free to think how much, except for being slightly older, Ruth resembled the handsome, smiling mothers in the advertisements. Her physique was supple and virginal, and people were always surprised to learn that she had four children.

"A case of Nature copying art directors," went through Jessica's mind.

"Will too!"

Eric's voice picked up volume.

"Now, darling," Ruth said, "the Daddy-Long-Legs is a *good* spider."

A brief, wordless yell was Eric's sole comment on the arachnid's putative virtue.

Jessica summoned perspective to her aid and reminded herself that Ruth was a good sort when away from the children. Before her marriage Mrs. Fleming had been a textile designer commanding twelve or fifteen thousand a year, and she was refreshingly unimpressed by the local stuffed shirts and efficient to work with for the Scouts and the Urban League. Nevertheless, Jessica often thought—with a twinge of pity for the waste and pathos involved—that what the world of fabrics had lost, the world of child care had not gained.

"The Daddy-Long-Legs eats the bad bugs, Eric," suggested the visitor helpfully. It occurred to her that the word "ambivalence" is used too casually. People do not stop to realize how painful is the feeling it actually stands for.

Ambivalence was what she felt about Eric. His blonde hair grew in hyacinthine curls, his nose had an Attic straightness and his large grey eyes were fringed with dark lashes. Instinctively, Jessica wanted to love and cherish him, but the expressions on his face and the cold, withdrawn look in his eyes often made her hate him instead.

Ruth pointed to a blazingly chromatic bed of petunias blooming like dutiful Organization Flowers behind the stone coping that edged the flagstone.

"The Daddy-Long-Legs," Ruth said, "eats the bad bugs on Daddy's flowers. The Daddy-Long-Legs *helps* Daddy."

Eric picked up a rhomboid-shaped block of wood—apparently left over from some recent construction—with which he had been playing. Jessica sat up, prepared for action, but Ruth was already speaking.

"I'll tell you what, honey," she said—the animation now perceptibly forced—"you go into the kitchen and get that little basket the strawberries came in. It's on the counter. Take it into your room and fill it up with your little teeny trucks, and then bring them out here and run them along the coping. The coping can be the Merritt Parkway."

Eric smiled, and the sheer loveliness of his features smote Jessica like a blow from a seraph's wing. There were times when you forgot that

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this child's usual mode of address was that of an infant power saw. There were times when he was irresistible.

"Me kill Daddy-Wong-Wegs first."

Intractability was perfectly distinct beneath Eric's pleasant tone, and the guest suddenly became aware of the contrast between this unseemly little tussle and the bland setting in which it was taking place. Ruth's patio had all the artifacts for outdoor living on the eastern seaboard. There were the glider, the fatly-mattressed chaises, the umbrella, the charcoal grill, the cedarwood table and benches (childproof, Ruth said) and the modernistic chairs whose brightly colored canvas, slung from metal frames, suggested laundry bags at bay.

It was not, however, that the Flemings were chi-chi. On the contrary, they laughed at pretentiousness and gracious living and spoke with accomplished mockery of Madison Avenue.

"The minstrel boy to the wars has gone," Ruth's husband had said. "In the ranks of Dreft you will find him."

If the Flemings spent a good deal of money, it was all in one way or another for the children. Indeed, the house itself had been undertaken because the children needed room for this, space for that, and encouragement for the other thing.

Jessica broke off her musing. The valse triste was still going on.

"I'll play with the trucks with you," the chatelaine of all the gay and hospitable appointments was saying.

A stab of sympathy pierced the visitor at the strained gaiety of Eric's mother's face. "Ruth is just as anxious to save the creature as I am," Jessica thought. "Oh, I wish I could decently get out of here!"

"Me kill Daddy-Wong-Wegs!" said Eric, his rising inflection containing the promise of hysteria.

"If you pick him up gently," Ruth said with elaborate womanliness, ". . . if you pick him up very carefully, he'll run up your arm and tickle you."

"Kickle?" asked Eric hopefully.

"He'll run right up your arm, twinkle, twinkle," Ruth said, waving her fingers. "It will feel so *funny* . . ."

But her too-eager tone betrayed her.

"No!" roared Eric.

He threw the block of wood angrily at his mother. It fell considerably short, and Ruth, making a visible effort at self-control, slowly reached for a cigarette and lit it with studied calm.

"You mustn't throw things, darling."

Eric shook his head in a badgered way, and bellowing with sobs, picked up the missile again. Jessica became aware that the muscles in her neck and shoulders were aching with tension. The mother-and-son dialogue continued on its predestined course.

"You wouldn't want to be *mean* to the Daddy-Long-Legs . . ."

"*Not* mean . . . !"

Jessica gave a sudden exclamation.

"Oh, look!" she said thankfully. "He's gone away!"

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Eric's eyes were streaming with tears and seemed scarcely capable of refraction from any outside object at all, to say nothing of such a small one; but he pointed with a chubby finger. Looking again, Jessica saw that the sacrificial victim had not departed, but had merely moved about a foot from his original spot.

"I have some gum here, Eric. Would you like some?" she said.

Eric stopped crying and looked at her while she fumbled in her bag. As she unwrapped the gum, Jessica remembered from her sons' Book of Knowledge that another name for the Daddy-Long-Legs is the Common Harvestman.

Eric took the gum and, apparently pacified, began a meditative conquest of it. The crisis, it seemed, was over. Ruth relaxed, and Jessica said to herself that it was almost unsatisfactory—the boy had not said thank-you for the gum—but at least the Common Harvestman had been spared by the Grim Reaper.

Then, with shattering abruptness, Eric stooped, picked up the wood and flung it down on the Daddy-Long-Legs.

Jessica gasped, and then bent forward.

"Missed him!" she said triumphantly, and retrieving the wood, put it on a table. The insect, she noted, had moved another foot away, but obviously did not realize that he stood in as much clear and present danger from mother love as he ever had from birds of prey.

Eric set his teeth and re-possessed himself of the wood. There was a light of near-madness in his eye, and an answering light gleamed in his mother's. The look of dementia consorted oddly, Jessica thought, with Ruth's spare, cool heraldry of know-how—the Bermuda shorts, sunburned musculature and pushcart-owner hairdo. But the mother's voice was jocular as she said, "All right, champ. I'll tell you what I'll do. I know you've been in the wading pool twice today, but I'll make an exception and let you go in again."

"Mother wants you to calm down," she added, smiling. "Maybe a little hydrotherapy . . ."

Momentarily, the offer tempted Eric, but then he stamped and shook his head violently.

"Me kill Daddy-Wong-Wegs!"

His cries pierced the eardrum, and he made a few feebly menacing gestures toward the Daddy-Long-Legs with the block of wood. It occurred to Jessica briefly that she might pick up the imperiled insect and remove it to safety, but although a Daddy-Long-Legs was not quite the same thing as a spider—she seemed to recall that it was technically a mite or a tick—she had a reluctance to handle things that crawled.

"Besides," she thought resentfully, "it's his mother's job."

Aloud, she said to Ruth, "I have to go downtown and get air put in the tires. Why don't I take Eric along with me? We could stop at the drug store and . . ."

Ruth's face, haggard by this time, flashed briefly into possessiveness and pride.

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"Oh, no! Thanks anyway. But he always cries if he's with anyone but me."

Jessica burst out laughing.

"Oh, Ruth . . . !"

Her friend did not hear. Eric's distress seemed beyond the possibility of any articulate utterance, but he framed something that sounded like, "Me kill . . ."

At that, his mother's pose shattered and she turned on the child.

"All right!" she screamed. "Kill the damned bug. I hope that will satisfy you! I'm going to get a drink."

With the back of her hand on her forehead, she strode toward the house. At the door, she flung a terse inquiry back to her guest, but Jessica said she would not have anything.

Ruth disappeared, and Jessica turned quickly to Eric.

It was, however, too late.

He had brought the wooden block down on the Daddy-Long-Legs and was looking about him in a bewildered fashion. As he slowly removed the block, Jessica noted with a little frisson of horror and pity that the insect was not entirely dead. She could not bring herself to a careful scrutiny, but her impression was that half the small body was squashed and two legs waved feebly. Taking the wooden block from Eric and resolutely not looking at what she was doing, she administered the coup de grâce.

Then she took Eric's hand and pointed to the path that led around to the front of the house.

"Come along," she said. "Let's go some place else," and steered the tired child away from the moment of truth and death in the afternoon.

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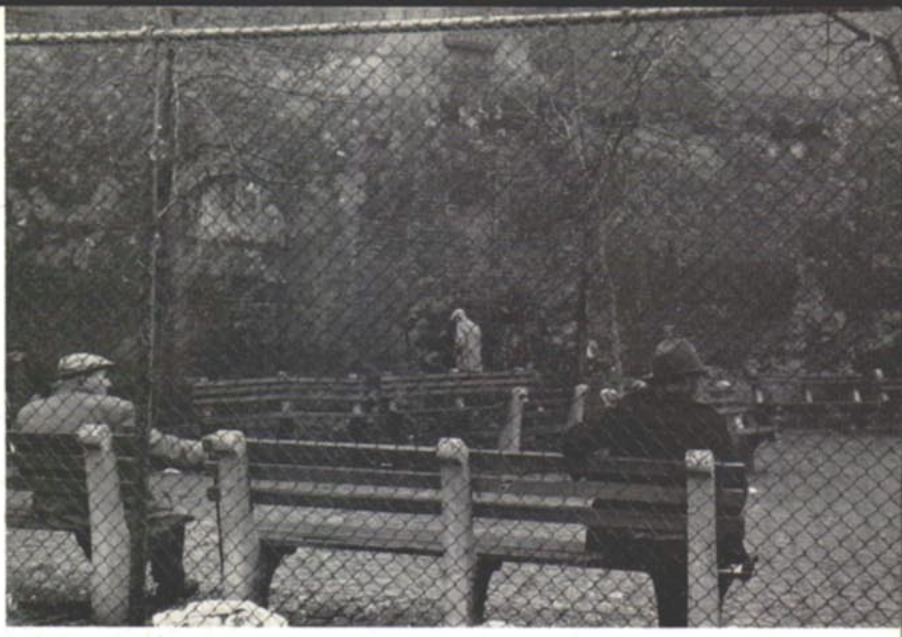

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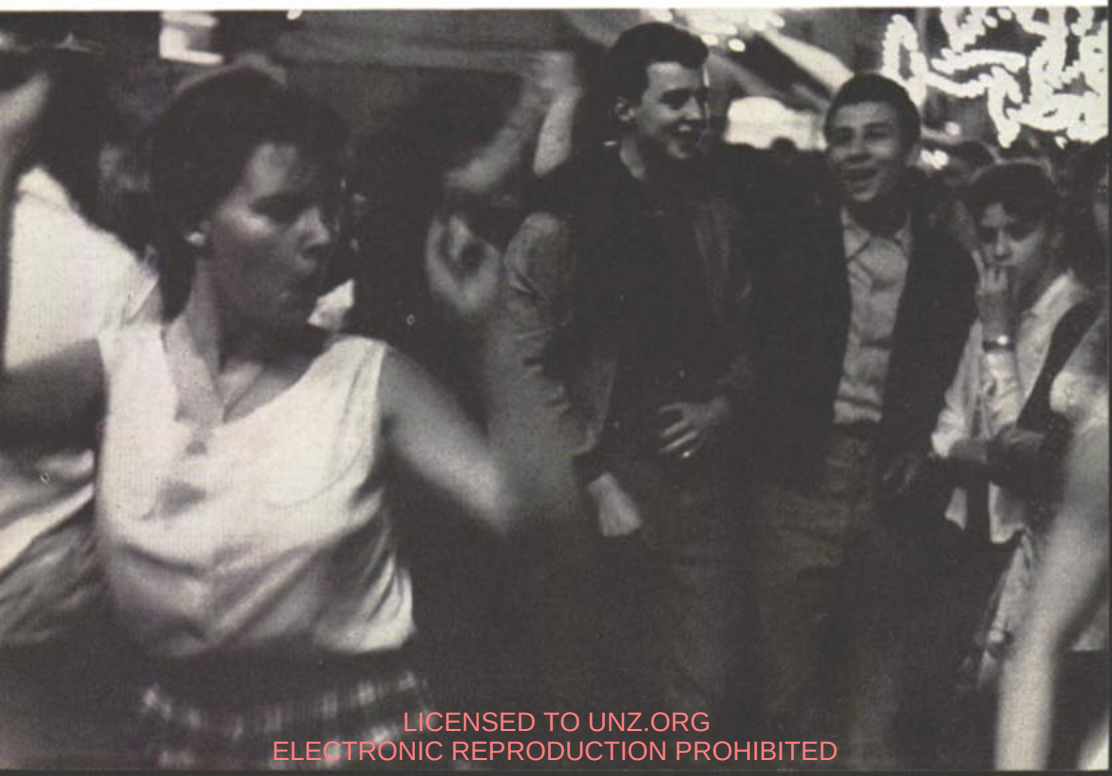

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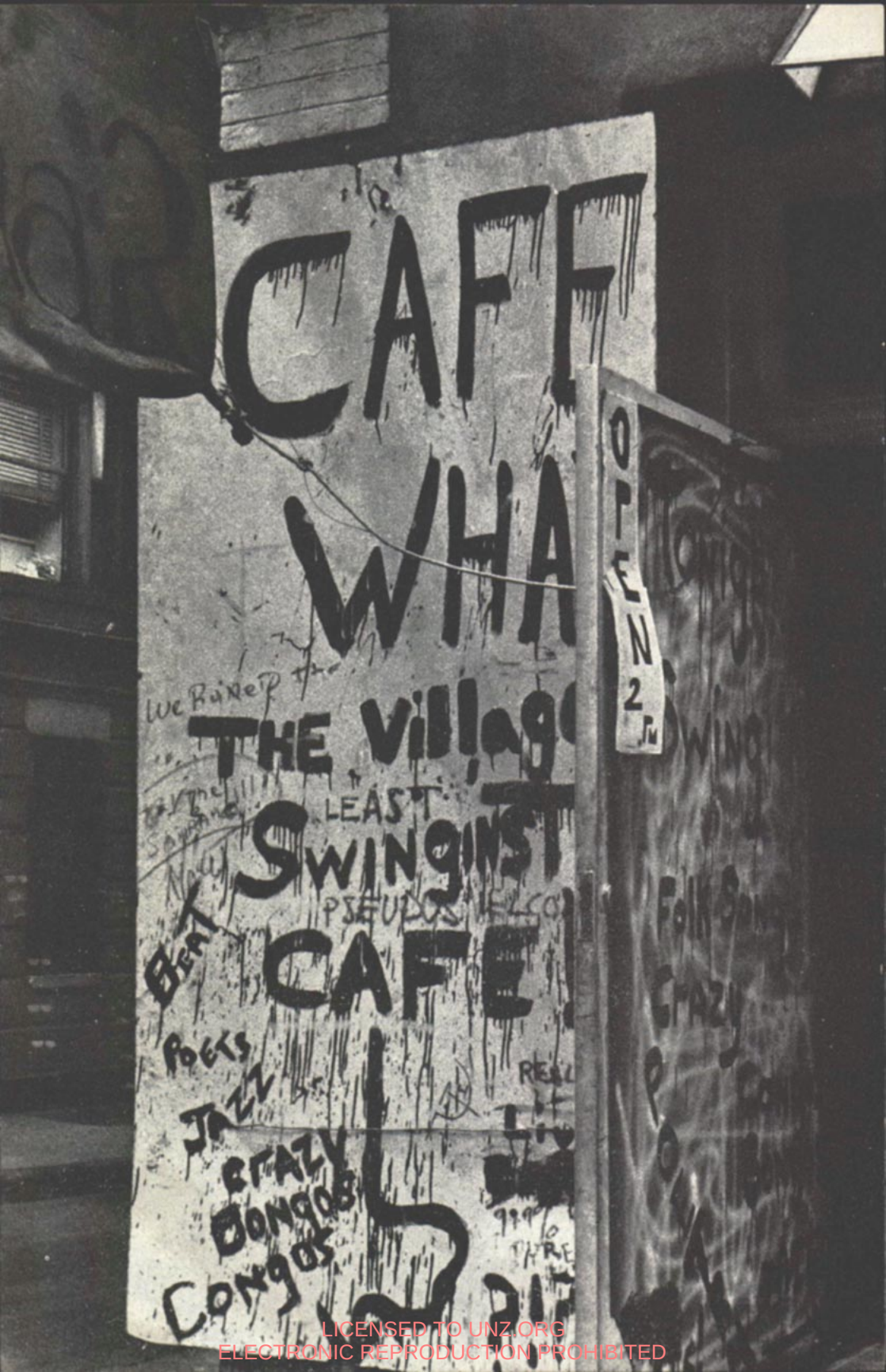

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